THE SADHU

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A STUDY IN MYSTICISM AND PRACTICAL RELIGION

BY

B. H. STREETER, M.A. (Oxon.), Hon. D.D. (Edin.)

FELLOW OF QUEEN'S COLLEGE, OXFORD ; CANON RESIDENTIARY OF HEREFORD
EDITOR OF 'FOUNDATIONS,' 'CONCERNING PRAYER,' 'IMMORTALITY'
'THE SPIRIT,' 'GOD AND THE STRUGGLE FOR EXISTENCE'

AND

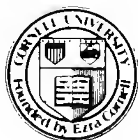
A. J. APPASAMY, B.A. (Madras), M.A. (Harvard)
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Frontispiece—SADHU SUNDAR SINGH.

INTRODUCTION

Between the Mystics of any past age and ourselves there is, quite apart from the problem of the mystic consciousness itself, a barrier of time and circumstance which no effort of the historic imagination can completely penetrate. In this book we attempt a study of a Mystic, with the unique advantage that he is a contemporary of our own.

He is also one of those Mystics who appeal to the present age because it is precisely his consciousness of communion with the Divine that impels him to a life of unselfish activity and the practical service of mankind.

Sadhu Sundar Singh—"the Sadhu" as he is popularly called—lives in this twentieth century a life which, so far as external conditions are concerned, resembles that of St. Francis of Assisi. His inward experience recalls rather, in some ways, St. Paul, in others Mother Juliana, while in others it is individual to himself. If, however, we venture thus to speak of him and them together, it is not by way of asserting a comparison of great-

ness: it is merely to indicate an identity of type. Whether Sundar Singh is a great man in the sense in which History employs that term, History alone can decide. In that sense no man can be pronounced great till his career is ended, nor even then by his own contemporaries. But while we do not suggest that the Sadhu is on the same plane with St. Francis or St. Paul, we feel that, from having known him, we understand them better.

The Sadhu is no metaphysician, no scientist, no higher critic. Indeed his intellectual horizon is in many respects nearer that of the New Testament writers than that of the modern world—but so also is his intuitive insight into moral and religious values. It is this directness and simplicity of spiritual perception which impresses upon all who have been in close contact with him the conviction that he has a message—not only to his own countrymen, but also to the West.

The manner of his teaching, even more than its substance, has a peculiar freshness for a Western hearer, with its picturesque abundance of illustration and parable, often quaint but always apt, its unstudied spontaneity, its gleams of kindly humour. It is rendered doubly effective by an arresting appearance—the impression of the turbaned head and saffron robe harmonising in some subtle way with the deep tranquillity of a countenance lighted up by loving-kindness, and

with a vivacity of expression, and occasionally of gesture, which somehow seems not to conflict with, but to express, the Peace of God within.

For the cold printed page to reproduce the atmosphere diffused by such a personality, or even to transmit to others the creative impression of his speech, is impossible. It is the more so, since we have his utterances, not in his native tongue in which he is a master of expression, but in English, a language of whose subtleties he has but small command, so that he has at times to express in the phraseology of conventional religion thoughts which to him are fresh and living. Face to face with him in private this hardly counts, hearing him on a platform it matters more, but where there is nothing but the bare written word it does materially impair the rich impression of the message and the man. Nevertheless, though the printed page cannot do full justice to the Sadhu, it can do something. The many who have seen him once, and have felt that there was much more beyond which they would gladly apprehend, will read into it the memory of his manner and his presence ; and even those to whom he is only known by hearsay may yet, we hope, find something of solid value. At any rate the attempt ought to be made to secure that the Sadhu's visit to the West should leave behind it something more definite, and

perhaps more permanent, than the personal impressions of a fortunate minority and the passing interest of the crowd.

The Sadhu's mind is an overflowing reservoir of anecdote, illustration, epigram and parable, but he never makes the slightest effort to avoid repetition ; in fact he appears to delight in it. " We do not," he says, " refuse to give bread to hungry people because we have already given bread to others." Hence we have constantly found the same material occurring in more than one of the written or printed authorities we have used. " My mouth," he says, " has no copyright " ; and many sayings that we had noted down from his own lips we afterwards discovered to be already in print. In most cases the versions differ extraordinarily little, but we have always felt free to correct or supplement one version by another at our discretion ; and, seeing that English is not the Sadhu's native tongue, we have not infrequently ventured on emendations of a purely verbal character.

It was only when we had begun to collect together scattered sayings on the same topics, that we ourselves realised the extent to which his teaching is a complete theology in picture form, making with his way of life and his mystic experience an organic whole. And if this book has any

merit beyond fidelity to fact, it largely consists in the attempt to seize and bring out this inner unity and coherence. This has necessarily involved much rearrangement of materials and the bringing together into the same context, occasionally even into the same paragraph, of sayings originally spoken on different occasions or derived by us from different sources. We have thought it necessary to indicate in the text the exact source of our information only in the case of important or disputable facts. But wherever phrases like "we asked" or "he told us" occur they imply that at least one of the authors was present when the Sadhu made the particular statement ; assertions are, however, often made on this same evidence in contexts where the insertion of the personal pronoun would have seemed intrusive.

Mr. A. J. Appasamy, who collaborates with me in this study, is a member of my own College who, after graduating in India and spending four years in post-graduate study in the United States of America, is now engaged in research upon the relation of the Mysticism of St. John to that of the Hindu Bhakti Poets. During the week which the Sadhu spent in Oxford last February, he was in continual contact with him. Subsequently, when we had conceived and had commended to the Sadhu the idea that a permanent record of his teaching might be of real value towards

following up and consolidating the results of his visit to England, Mr. Appasamy lived with the Sadhu for about a fortnight in London and Paris, asking questions and making notes, and was present at the interviews which he had with various distinguished persons. One such interview was of particular value for our purpose. Baron von Hügel, who had read Mrs. Parker's account of the Sadhu, put to him a number of carefully prepared questions suggested by his unrivalled knowledge of the literature of Mysticism; and he was so good as to write us a memorandum on certain aspects of the Sadhu's philosophy and religion, and subsequently to discuss them with us by word of mouth.

I myself had personal talks with the Sadhu and heard him address meetings both in Oxford and in London; and last May, just before leaving for America, he came again to Oxford and stayed with me in College for the express purpose of discussing the book. For the greater part of a couple of days he answered our questions and poured out his ideas, providing us with much material, including an account of his mystical experiences, which, to the best of our belief, has never been made public before.

In order to secure unity of style and presentation, it was arranged that the final rewriting of the book should be in my hands. But at

every stage, including even the final revision of the proofs, my collaborator and I have worked in the closest harmony and co-operation, and it is impossible to say of the book as a whole that it is any more the work of the one than of the other ; it is in every sense a joint production.

It was the Sadhu's desire that any net profit that might accrue to the authors from this book should be devoted to some religious purpose. I asked him to name one, but he preferred to leave the choice to me. My collaborator and I have agreed that it would be most appropriatelyassigned to the National Missionary Society of India.

The most considerable account of the Sadhu that has so far appeared is *Sadhu Sundar Singh*, by Mrs. Parker, of the London Mission, Trivandram, Travancore, published by the Christian Literature Society of India, who have courteously assented to our reproducing the portrait which forms our frontispiece. By the author's kind permission we have to some extent drawn upon this valuable source of information. But, partly because her book has been already so widely circulated both in England and America, and partly because our purpose is not primarily biographical, we have, so far as possible, deliberately avoided covering the same ground.

Next to the notes taken of what we heard

from the Sadhu's own lips, our main authorities for his teaching have been three. First, the full shorthand reports of six of his addresses in this country, generously put at our disposal by the National Council of the Y.M.C.A., through the kind intervention of Mr. W. Hindle—not the only service for which we owe him gratitude. Secondly a collection of the Sadhu's discourses published by the National Missionary Society of India, Madras, in the Tamil language—the native tongue of Mr. Appasamy. The Sadhu informed us that these were dictated by him in Hindustani, during a period of comparative leisure, to a friend whom he relied on as expert in the interpretation of his thought. Thirdly, *Seven Addresses*, delivered in Ceylon and published under that title by the Kandy United Christian Mission. We have also incorporated some valuable matter which appeared in *The Bible in the World* and in *The Foreign Field*, June 1920. Some occasional quotations from writings by Mr. A. Zahir, of St. John's College, Agra, a friend and devoted admirer of the Sadhu, and by Mr. A. E. Stokes, at one time his fellow-worker, are acknowledged where they occur in the text. We desire here to express our hearty thanks to those editors and publishers who have most generously allowed us an unrestricted liberty in making use of copyright material.

It has been our good fortune that several of our Indian friends now in England happen to have come into close personal contact with the Sadhu at different periods of his life from school-days onward. These, as well as various English friends who had known him in India and elsewhere, have given us the greatest assistance in the way of answering questions, suggesting points of view, or in reading the whole or portions of the book in manuscript or in proof. But when it is impossible to name all it would be invidious to mention any. Finally, we gratefully record our obligation to Mrs. White, of Sherborne, for the immense labour which she has bestowed upon the correction of the proofs, and to Mr. R. D. Richardson, of Hertford College, Oxford, who has compiled the Index.

That this book should be a true interpretation of his message has, we know from his letters, been the Sadhu's constant prayer. The book is finished; but we are filled with a sense of its inadequacy to portray the man. Coming from the presence of Sundar Singh, men forget themselves, they forget him—but they think of Christ.

B. H. S.

Queen's College, Oxford,
Feb. 1, 1921.

I

THE MAN AND HIS MAKING

THE career of Sundar Singh, up to his return to India from the West in September 1920, falls into four periods clearly defined. The first—of which the latter part is marked by an ever more and more anxious quest for Peace—ends in his sixteenth year with his conversion to Christianity. The second, characterised by his adoption, as a Christian, of the life of a Hindu "holy man" or Sadhu,[1] comprises seven years of varied experience and inward growth. At the age of twenty-three he was impelled to attempt, in imitation of our Lord, a Fast of forty days. The forty days were apparently not completed, but from the attempt he himself dates a great accession of spiritual strength and insight. This marks the Fast as the beginning of a third period in his life — a period of, relatively speaking, spiritual maturity, as well as of adventurous labours and hairbreadth escapes. Till the end

[1] The word is pronounced as if spelt Sādhoo, with accent on the first syllable. Its significance is explained on p. 11.

of 1917 his activities were confined to Northern India and Tibet. Early in 1918 a visit to South India and Ceylon opened a fourth period of preaching tours involving world-wide travel. The first of these brought him to Burma, the Straits Settlements, China and Japan ; the second to Europe, America and Australia. During these three years he has exchanged the hardships and persecutions, which were the fiery trial of his earlier life, for the more perilous ordeal which tests the man who in his lifetime is saluted—and that not undeservedly—as an Apostle and a Saint.

In Quest of Peace
1889–1904

Born of wealthy parents, September 3, 1889, at Rampur, in the state of Patiala in North India, the youngest son of his father, Sundar was brought up in the midst of luxury. The early experience of a comfortable home is one to which he frequently alludes in his addresses ; contrasting its soft ease, made worthless by spiritual disquiet, with the hardships of a sadhu's life, rich in the happiness of inward joy and peace. His parents were Sikhs by race, but in religious thought and practice they seem to have been almost as much Hindus, frequenting the places

of worship, reading the sacred books and keeping in close contact with the teachers of both religions. Alluding to this period of his life, with a playing upon words which is characteristic of his speech, both in English and still more in his native tongue, Sundar Singh says, "I was not a Sikh, but a seeker—after Truth."

It was his mother, above all, who fostered and guided his unique religious bent. Many have marked the love that beams on his face whenever he speaks of her. His addresses to mothers hold forth lofty ideas of the possibilities of a mother's influence. A minister once suggested, "It would add very much to your effectiveness if you would take a course in a theological college." "I have been," replied the Sadhu, "to the best theological college in the world." "Is that so?" rejoined the minister, surprised. "The mother's bosom," said the Sadhu, "is the best theological college in the world." In speaking of her to the Archbishop of Canterbury, he said: "If I do not see my mother in heaven, I shall ask God to send me to hell so that I may be with her." His mother constantly held before him the life of a sadhu as the ideal to follow when he grew up, bidding him abandon the things of the world and strive to obtain that inner Peace, alone permanent and permanently satisfying, the quest for which has been im-

memorial in Indian religion. She died when he was fourteen, and we may surmise that the sense of loss helped to accentuate the ardour of his quest during the next two years.[1]

The desire to obtain this Peace which she had planted in his heart grew stronger; but the means for obtaining it which she had pointed out completely failed him. By the age of seven he knew by heart most of the Bhagavad Gita, by common consent the most sublime of the Hindu Scriptures. By sixteen he had read the Granth of the Sikhs, the Muhammadan Quran, and a number[2] of the Hindu Upanishads—a remarkable achievement even if we recollect that the Indian matures considerably earlier than the Anglo-Saxon. But it was all in vain. His mother had taken him to priests and sadhus who might point out to him sacred texts which would show him the way; and for some time, under the direction of a Hindu sadhu, he practised a form of Yoga—one of the methods, much esteemed among Hindus, of seeking identification with the Supreme Spirit, and the resultant peace and illumination, by concentration leading up to a state of trance—but with no avail. With the Bible he first became acquainted at the Presbyterian

[1] The reflexions on the death of dear ones seem to be based on personal experience, p. 162.

[2] He is uncertain how many; he thinks fifty-two. The Quran would be read in Urdu.

Mission School in his village, but it repelled him as being utterly subversive of the religion of his fathers and offensive to the proud traditions of his Sikh blood. He little thought that from this unlikely source he would ultimately gain the Peace he sought.

CONVERT AND SADHU
1904–1912

The story of his conversion, which occurred on December 18, 1904, is best given in his own words, quoted from one of the Kandy addresses. " Preachers and Christians in general had often come to me and I used to resist them and persecute them. When I was out in any town I got people to throw stones at Christian preachers. I would tear up the Bible and burn it when I had a chance. In the presence of my father I cut up the Bible and other Christian books and put kerosene oil upon them and burnt them. I thought this was a false religion and tried all I could to destroy it. I was faithful to my own religion, but I could not get any satisfaction or peace, though I performed all the ceremonies and rites of that religion. So I thought of leaving it all and committing suicide. Three days after I had burnt the Bible, I woke up about three o'clock in the morning, had my usual bath, and prayed, ' O God, if there is a

God, wilt thou show me the right way or I will kill myself.' My intention was that, if I got no satisfaction, I would place my head upon the railway line when the 5 o'clock train passed by and kill myself. If I got no satisfaction in this life, I thought I would get it in the next. I was praying and praying but got no answer; and I prayed for half-an-hour longer hoping to get peace. At 4.30 A.M. I saw something of which I had no idea at all previously. In the room where I was praying I saw a great light. I thought the place was on fire. I looked round, but could find nothing. Then the thought came to me that this might be an answer that God had sent me. Then as I prayed and looked into the light, I saw the form of the Lord Jesus Christ. It had such an appearance of glory and love. If it had been some Hindu incarnation I would have prostrated myself before it. But it was the Lord Jesus Christ whom I had been insulting a few days before. I felt that a vision like this could not come out of my own imagination. I heard a voice saying in Hindustani, 'How long will you persecute me? I have come to save you; you were praying to know the right way. Why do you not take it?' The thought then came to me, 'Jesus Christ is not dead but living and it must be He Himself.' So I fell at His feet and got this wonderful

Peace which I could not get anywhere else. This is the joy I was wishing to get. This was heaven itself. When I got up, the vision had all disappeared; but although the vision disappeared the Peace and Joy have remained with me ever since. I went off and told my father that I had become a Christian. He told me, 'Go and lie down and sleep; why, only the day before yesterday you burnt the Bible; and you say you are a Christian now.' I said, 'Well, I have discovered now that Jesus Christ is alive and have determined to be His follower. To-day I am His disciple and I am going to serve Him.'"

The suggestion has apparently been made to him that the vision was nothing but a dream or a creation of his own imagination; or, again, that it was similar to visions seen by Hindu Yogis in that trance state which Sundar is himself inclined to ascribe to self-hypnotism. In reply Sundar emphasises the two facts that before commencing his prayer he had taken a cold bath that winter morning and so could not have been dreaming, and that the appearance of Christ was entirely unexpected. But he attaches most importance to the consideration that the effect of the vision has been so revolutionary and so permanent; the Peace which rushed into his soul on that occasion has never abandoned him

all these fourteen years, and in moments of exceptional stress or persecution only becomes the more profound. The one inference he can draw from this is that some new power from outside entered into his life from that moment, and that it was Christ Himself who appeared and spoke to him. He also *thinks* that at that time he did not know the story of St. Paul's conversion ; though, of course, on a point of that kind the human memory cannot be implicitly relied on. But he acknowledges, and is indeed always anxious to emphasise, the part played by the Bible in leading up to his conversion.[1] In speaking to us of visions of Christ seen, and words heard, by him on subsequent occasions when in a state of Ecstasy, he clearly and emphatically distinguished the vision at his conversion, when he saw Christ with his bodily eyes and heard Him "with these ears," from the later visions when he saw and heard with "spiritual" sight and hearing.

Believing as we do that the spirit of scientific enquiry is in no respect opposed to the spirit of Religion, but that they are two separate ways by which man may attain to different aspects of the one Truth, we should ourselves maintain that the Divine power works in and through the laws of psychology, no less than in and through the

[1] Cf. p. 203.

other laws of Nature.[1] Hence we have no hesitation in affirming our conviction that the Sadhu did in this vision receive a real and definite Divine call. But we do not on that account feel any inclination to deny that the *form* in which it was received was conditioned by psychological laws. At any rate, there is no doubt that this vision was the turning-point of his life. Henceforth the discordant elements which had been striving within him for mastery were composed into a new harmony, a new equilibrium was set up, a new scale of values was established, and from that hour he became a new man.

His father, his uncle, his elder brother—his mother, we remember, was already dead—made every effort to dissuade the boy from becoming a Christian. Promises of the wealth and social position that would be his if he remained in the ancestral religion, doleful reminders of the shame and dishonour that would fall upon the family should he become a Christian, failed to move him from his purpose. When love and reason failed, persecution was tried. For nine months indignities and humiliations were heaped upon him. After that, when an appeal by a friendly Raja to his honour and pride of race left his resolution still unbroken, he was finally disowned and ordered to depart for ever. He left his

[1] Cf. *The Spirit*, ed. B. H. Streeter, Essay II. (Macmillan).

home with food in which poison had been mingled. It was better that he should die than continue to disgrace the family.

"I remember the night when I was driven out of my home—the first night. When I came to know my Saviour I told my father and my brother and my other relations. At first they did not take much notice; but afterwards they thought that it was a great dishonour that I should become a Christian, and so I was driven out of my home. The first night I had to spend, in cold weather, under a tree. I had had no such experience. I was not used to living in such a place without a shelter. I began to think: 'Yesterday and before that I used to live in the midst of luxury at my home; but now I am shivering here, and hungry and thirsty and without shelter, with no warm clothes and no food.' I had to spend the whole night under the tree. But I remember the wonderful joy and peace in my heart, the presence of my Saviour. I held my New Testament in my hand. I remember that night as my first night in heaven. I remember the wonderful joy that made me compare that time with the time when I was living in a luxurious home. In the midst of luxuries and comfort I could not find peace in my heart. The presence of the Saviour changed the suffering into peace.

Ever since then I have felt the presence of the Saviour."[1]

He was baptized at Simla, in the Church of England, on September 3, 1905.

In deciding as a Christian to don the habit and take up the way of life of a Hindu "holy man," Sundar was putting into practice a striking and creative idea. A sadhu, a sannyasi, or a fakir—the distinction between these we need not here elaborate—owns nothing on earth but the saffron robe which is the mark of his "profession." He devotes himself entirely to the particular type of the religious life he has adopted, which varies with the individual and may consist predominantly either in ascetic practices, in solitary meditation and mystic trance, or, more rarely, in preaching. A "holy man" is treated with profound respect. Men of the highest place do him reverence. Superstition invests him with mysterious powers. To supply him with a meal or a night's lodging is an act of religious merit—a fact which makes the "profession" a possible one to men of high ideals and holy life, an attractive one to many whose ideals and whose lives are the reverse of high or holy. But, in spite of the delinquencies of the many, the conspicuous asceticism of the few has kept alive its prestige; and a true sannyasi

[1] *The Bible in the World*, June 1920.

is saluted with divine and royal titles like Swami, Mahatma, Maharaja.

The adoption by a convert to Christianity of the rôle of a sadhu promised one great advantage at the price of one great difficulty. The advantage lay in the opportunity of presenting the new religion in a specially and characteristically Hindu form. The difficulty arose from the fact that the respect and veneration traditionally accorded to the person and life of a sadhu was liable to be turned into resentment and persecution once it was realised that it was Christianity which this particular sadhu was concerned to preach. During the next seven years Sundar was to experience acutely both the difficulties and the advantages of the choice he made—wandering from place to place, possessing nothing but his robe, his blanket, and a copy of the New Testament, living on food offered him by hearers grateful or compassionate, or, when that was not forthcoming, on roots or leaves, accepting hospitality when offered or, failing that, sleeping in caves or under trees.

The population of India, it should be remembered, and of the adjoining states lives mainly in villages. Hence it is in the villages, where the advent of a newcomer requires no advertisement to collect an audience, that the Sadhu has until quite recently done his main preaching work. His

first journey covered the Punjab—his own province,—Kashmir, Baluchistan and Afghanistan. He ended up with a short rest at a village named Kotgarh, in the Himalayas, some 6000 feet above sea-level and 55 miles from Simla. This village has ever since been a kind of headquarters or, at least, a point of beginning and ending for his preaching tours.

Here, towards the end of 1906, Sundar came into contact with Mr. S. E. Stokes, a wealthy American gentleman who, fascinated by the character and ideals of St. Francis of Assisi, had renounced all earthly possessions and was endeavouring to found a brotherhood for missionary work in India on the model of the early Franciscans. "Some weeks after I had changed my life," writes Mr. Stokes, "an Indian Christian was moved to join me. He was a convert from the Sikhs and had been travelling about the country as a Christian sadhu (holy man) for more than a year. . . . When my work took me to the plains, he remained in charge of our interests up in the mountains and laboured so faithfully and with such effect that all were astonished. His work has been far better than my own, and although he is scarcely more than a boy he has suffered hunger, cold, sickness and even imprisonment for his Master."[1] Besides

[1] S. E. Stokes, *The Love of God*, p. 7 (Longmans). Mr. Stokes gave up the Franciscan manner of life after about five years.

preaching in the villages the two worked together in the Leper Asylum at Sabathu and in a plague camp near Lahore. Sundar himself says that he and Stokes actually lived together only for three months, though they worked in co-operation for two years. From Stokes naturally he heard much about St. Francis.

The Sadhu always speaks of St. Francis with the utmost veneration; and to have thus, at the beginning of his career, been enabled to admire a spiritual genius whose aims and manner of life were so closely akin to his own ideal of a "Christian sadhu" cannot but have been both an inspiration and an abiding influence. At the same time we must rule out the idea of any conscious imitation of St. Francis. "Be yourself, do not copy others" is a fundamental principle with the Sadhu, both in his own life and in his advice to others. Indeed, while speaking with considerable admiration of the character and work of Mr. Stokes, he told us that he thought that his friend had made a mistake in attempting too slavishly to imitate the Franciscan model, and that he had declined himself to become a full member of the new brotherhood.

In regard to one very important matter he has always hitherto refused to imitate St. Francis. "St. Francis felt that it was God's will that he

should start a new Order : but I do not feel it is God's will for me." Wisely or unwisely, he has so far given small encouragement to those who have urged him to form an Order of Christian sadhus. He thinks that such Orders generally become corrupt after the lifetime of the Founder, and also that religious organisations tend to make too much of human help. "On the mountains torrents flow right along, cutting their own courses. But on the plains canals have to be dug out painfully by men so that the water might flow. So among those who live on the heights with God, the Holy Spirit makes its way through of its own accord, whereas those who devote little time to prayer and communion with God have to organise painfully."

This decision of the Sadhu's, and his complete lack of interest in organisation—and probably of any capacity for it—differentiates him at once from St. Francis and St. Paul, the two supreme Missionary Mystics, with each of whom he has so many other points of contact. The Sadhu has felt deep solicitude for individuals among his "spiritual god-children," as he calls them, but "the care of all the churches," or the threatened contumacy of a General Chapter he has not experienced. He has borne the cross in many ways, but he has never had to agonise or fight lest some beloved community should relapse to

legalism, collapse in schism, or apostasise from the primitive simplicity of the Rule. And, perhaps, just for this reason, there are subtle ways in which his vision has in some directions not penetrated quite so deep as that of Paul or Francis.

In 1908 the Sadhu took his first journey into Tibet. And from that time on he has made that country his principal field of work. He was drawn to Tibet, partly by the fact that little or no Christian preaching has been done there hitherto—there being only a few Missionaries, chiefly Moravians, on the border,—and partly because he regards the conversion of Tibet as a duty pre-eminently incumbent on the missionary effort of the Indian Church. The religion of Tibet is a debased form of Buddhism ; and the fact that the priests, or Lamas as they are called, in virtue of their priestly office occupy also all positions of civil authority naturally makes them bitter opponents of religious innovation. But the attraction for the Sadhu of this particular field has been undoubtedly strengthened by the exceptional hardships which the work entails. Suffering amidst the cold and snow, the certainty of persecution, and the possibility of martyrdom appeal to that passion in him for companionship in the sufferings of Christ which is a dominant quality in his life and which has led many—mistakenly, as we shall see later—

to style him an Ascetic. Since 1908 his plan has been to spend half the year or rather more in Tibet, and during the winter months to work in India. He once tried preaching in Tibet in winter, but a drift of snow twelve feet deep kept him seventeen days in one house, and convinced him that the life of an itinerant preacher was impossible there at that season.

The years 1909 and 1910 were spent at St. John's Divinity College, Lahore. A fellow-student at the College recalls how there also he lived the life of a sadhu. Though he never complained and rarely criticised, he was undoubtedly out of harmony with the interests and outlook of the average student. He was also sincerely distressed at the extent to which Christians in general fell short of the ideals of their profession—a judgement which must be interpreted in the light of the Sadhu's own exalted practice, and not be taken as a special reflexion on the Christians of Lahore. The curriculum of studies also, however suited to an ordinary student, could hardly have appealed to one of his temperament and experience; and it would seem that to this period of his life must be assigned the maturing of the conviction that religious knowledge of the highest kind is acquired, not by intellectual study, but by direct contact with Christ, which expresses itself in his

favourite doctrine that Religion is a matter, not of the head, but of the heart.

It was apparently at Lahore that he first came across the *Imitation of Christ*, a book which he has read frequently since and which has left clear traces on his "Philosophy of the Cross." The Bible and the Book of Nature are, he says, the only books which he still regularly reads. And indeed they are the only books he has always by him. But occasionally when staying with friends he will take up other books, especially if he finds something by or about one of the Mystics. He has read a life of St. Francis—by whom or when he could not remember, that is the kind of detail in which he takes no interest. At some time he has dipped into Al-Ghazzali and other Sufi Mystics. He has also read in this way something of Boehme, St. Theresa, St. John of the Cross, and a very little of Swedenborg and Madame Guyon. We fancy that he only made the acquaintance of these last five in comparatively recent years, but could learn nothing definite from him about dates.

While at college he began to learn to play the Sitar, an Indian stringed instrument, but he soon gave it up, because it took up too much time and because, as a sadhu, it would be difficult to carry it about with him. So he gave it to a friend, asking him to make the best use of it for the

glory of God. Music affected him very differently in different moods ; when his mind was burdened with the largeness of tasks ahead, it tended to be depressing. At supreme moments he sometimes breaks out with hymns of thanksgiving, but his general attitude he humorously expresses thus : " I would rather not sing : I am afraid I might only make a noise."

Shortly after this, he came to an important decision. He had been recommended for Deacon's Orders, and had been already given a license to preach. But when he realised that taking Holy Orders in the Church of England would hamper his freedom of action in regard to Christians of other denominations and would impose restrictions and limitations on his sphere of Christian work, he decided not to proceed to the Diaconate and at the same time returned his license to Bishop Lefroy, at that time Bishop of Lahore. The Bishop, recognising the call of the Sadhu for work of a special character and a wider sphere, entirely acquiesced in the wisdom of the step, and continued to the end of his days to take a deep and fatherly interest in him and in his work.

When the Sadhu was in Oxford we enquired his exact motive in giving up his license. " I was told," he replied, " that if ordained in the Church of England I could not preach in other

Churches, though I could speak in the schools and colleges of other Christians." This remark led on to a conversation on the subject of Christian unity. We noted the following characteristically epigrammatic remarks: "If Christians cannot live together happily here in this short life, how will they live together in Eternity?" "The children of God are very dear but very queer. They are very nice but very narrow." "I told the Archbishop of Canterbury that just as there are high caste and low caste in India, so there are high Church and low Church in the Church of England: Christ Himself would not have made such differences." Speaking further of his interview with the Archbishop at Lambeth, "I told him frankly," he said, "that I was speaking in Anglican Churches and that I had also accepted an invitation from Dr. J. H. Jowett to speak in Westminster Chapel and another invitation to speak in the Metropolitan Tabernacle. 'That is quite all right—for *you*,' said the Archbishop with a smile." But though quietly insisting on complete freedom of action for himself, the Sadhu is in no sense hostile to ecclesiastical authority as such. Before leaving the Archbishop, responding to a suggestion from a High Church friend who accompanied him, he devoutly kneeled before him to receive his blessing. The Archbishop

expressed an anxiety to meet him again, and, as this could not be arranged, was present on the platform at a meeting of London clergy, presided over by the Bishop of London, at which the Sadhu spoke.

Three anecdotes will suffice just to suggest the "atmosphere," so to speak, of the life of a Christian sadhu unattached to any religious organisation, which from now on he finally adopted. The first we heard from his own lips in a drawing-room in Paris.

One day while journeying towards a certain village he caught sight of two men in front of him, one of whom suddenly disappeared. A little farther on he overtook the remaining man, who, pointing to a figure on the ground covered with a sheet, told the Sadhu that this was his friend who had died by the way. "I am a stranger here; I pray you, help me with money for his burial." Sundar had only two pice which had been given him for the toll bar of a bridge he was to cross, and his blanket, but these he gave to the man and passed on. He had not gone far when the man came running after him, fell at his feet and sobbed out, "My companion is really dead." The Sadhu did not understand, until he explained that it was their practice to take it in turns to prey on travellers by pretending that one of them was dead. This they had done

for years, but that day when the man went back to call his friend there was no response, and on lifting the cloth he was horror-stricken to find him actually dead. "I am very glad," he added naïvely, "that it was not my turn to play the dead man to-day." The wretched man, convinced that here was some great saint whom they had robbed of all he had, and thus merited the displeasure of the gods, implored forgiveness of the Sadhu. Then Sundar spoke to him of Christ and how from Him he might obtain forgiveness. "Make me your disciple," said the man. "How can I make you my disciple when I myself am only a disciple?" replied the Sadhu.[1] He allowed the man, however, to accompany him in his wanderings for a while. Later on he sent him to a mission station near Garhwal, where in due time he was baptized.

A second story we quote from Mrs. Parker's sketch.

"At a village in the district of Thoria the people behaved so badly to him that his nights were always spent in the jungle as long as he was working amongst them. On a particularly dark night, after a discouragingly hard day, the Sadhu found a cave where he spread his blanket and spent the night. When daylight came it

[1] We are not quite certain whether this reply was made on this or on some other occasion.

revealed a large leopard still asleep close to him. The sight almost paralysed him with fear, but once outside the cave he could only reflect upon the great providence of God that had preserved him while he slept. 'Never to this day,' he says, 'has any wild animal done me harm.'"[1]

Our authority for the story that follows is a signed letter to the North Indian Christian weekly, the *Nur Afshan*, quoted by Mr. Zahir.[2] The writer, an Indian gentleman in the Forest Department of the Civil Service, tells how one day, when descending a mountain, he met a sadhu going up. Curiosity prompted him to watch what would happen, so instead of joining him for a talk, as he at first thought of doing, he waited. And this was what he saw. When the Sadhu reached a village he sat down upon a log, and, wiping the perspiration from his face, commenced singing a Christian hymn. Soon a crowd gathered, but when it was found that the love of Christ was the theme, many of the people became angry—including the writer of the letter, who was a keen member of the Arya Samaj.[3] One man jumped up and

[1] Parker, p. 46. [2] Zahir, *A Lover of the Cross*, p. 14.

[3] The Arya Samaj is perhaps the most influential of the various modern reform movements in India. It is a kind of Protestant Reformation of Hinduism, its motto being "back to the Vedas"—the primitive scriptures of India—accompanied by the abolition of images in worship and great stress on education. Much of its inspiration is derived from its claim to find in the most ancient elements of the national religion ideals sufficiently lofty to be an effective counterpoise to the growing attraction of Christianity.

dealt the Sadhu a blow that knocked him off his seat, cutting his cheek and hand badly. Without a word Sundar rose, bound up his hand with his turban, and, the blood still running down his face, began to sing praises to God and to invoke His blessing on his persecutors. The man, Kripa Ram, who had thrown Sundar down, afterwards sought long and earnestly for him, in the hope that he might be baptized by "that wounded hand"; but not finding him, he accepted baptism from a local missionary, whose name is given, but still hopes some day to see the Sadhu. The witness goes on to explain at length how the incident has completely revolutionised his own attitude towards Christianity, and ends with a request to all readers of the paper to pray for him that he may be able (by baptism) to confess openly his faith in Christ.

The Achievement of Maturity 1912–1918

In spite of the dissuasions of friends, the Sadhu, in his twenty-third year, felt driven to essay a Fast of Forty Days in imitation of his Master. Choosing a shadowy place in the jungly country between Hardwar and Dehra Dun, and noting down in his New Testament the exact day on which he began his fast, he placed near him, as

a means of reckoning time, a heap of forty stones, one of which he was to throw aside every day. During the early stages of the fast there was a feeling of intense burning in his stomach on account of lack of food, but this soon passed away. In the course of the fast he saw Christ; not, he says, as at his conversion, with his physical eyes, because they were now dim and could not see anything, but in a spiritual vision, with pierced hands, bleeding feet and radiant face. Throughout the whole period he felt in himself a remarkable enrichment of that sense of peace and happiness which has been his in a measure ever since he became a Christian. Indeed so great was this sense that he had no temptation whatever to give up the fast. As his physical powers became enfeebled he saw, or thought he saw, a lion or other wild animal and heard it growl; the growl appeared to come from a distance, while the animal itself seemed to be near—hearing apparently being more quickly affected than sight. Also he became too weak to throw aside the stones, with the result that he lost count of time, and is quite uncertain how many days he completed. Two wood-cutters found him in this condition, and carried him in his blanket to Rishi Kish and then to Dehra Dun. He remembers, being at the time fully conscious of what was

happening, though he had not the strength to speak.

The Sadhu asserts that the Fast has left a permanent effect on his spiritual life. Certain doubts he had entertained were finally cleared up. Previously he had sometimes wondered whether his sense of peace and joy might somehow be "a hidden power of his own life," welling up from within himself and not due to the Divine presence. But during the fast, when his bodily powers were nil or almost nil, the peace increased considerably and became much stronger. This has convinced him that this peace is a heaven-born peace and not the result of the natural operation of his human faculties. Another consequence of the fast was the conviction that the spirit was something different from the brain. He had been used to wonder what would become of his spirit after the decay of his body. But since during the fast he found that as his body became weaker his spiritual faculties seemed to become more active and alert, he drew the inference that the spirit was something altogether apart from the brain. "The brain was only the office where the Spirit worked. The brain is like an organ and the spirit like the organist that plays on it. Two or three of the notes may go wrong and may produce no music. That does not, however, imply the absence of the organist."

The Fast, he told us, also left a permanent influence on his character. "Before I attempted the fast of forty days I was frequently assailed by temptations—when you write your book you ought to write about my weaknesses also—more especially, when I was tired, I used to get annoyed when people came to talk to me and ask questions. I still feel this difficulty, but nothing like so much as before the fast. Indeed I have been told by my friends that it is not noticeable—but even if they are right it is still a weakness which I do not like to have in my life. It has caused me much difficulty and doubt, but perhaps it is given me to keep me humble, like the thorn in the flesh, mentioned by St. Paul, which I sometimes think may have been the same thing. Or perhaps it is partly the result of still living in the body, but I wish it were not so. Before the fast, I suffered also from other temptations. When suffering from hunger and thirst I used to complain, and to ask why the Lord did not provide. He had told me not to take any money with me. If I had taken money I could have bought what I needed. Since the fast, however, when overtaken by physical hardships I say, 'It is my Father's will, perhaps I have done something to deserve it.' Again before the fast I was sometimes tempted to give up the life of a sadhu with its hardships, to go back to the

luxury of my father's house, to get married and live in comfort. Could I not be a good Christian and live a life of communion with God there also? But then I saw that, though it was no sin for others to live in comfort and have money and home, God's call for me was different; and the gift of Ecstasy which he had given me is better than any home. Here I find wonderful joys which transcend all others. My real marriage is with Christ. I do not say that marriage is not good for others. If I am already bound to Christ, how can I marry another?"

We asked whether he had ever fasted since for shorter periods. "I have been forced to, on the Himalayas," he replied.

"Have you found this kind of fasting good for your spiritual life?"

"I have found everything to be of use to me in my spiritual life, hunger and thirst as well as other things."

The Sadhu made it clear to us that he did not undertake the Fast with a view to inflict upon himself suffering—that, he declared, is a Hindu idea.[1] He does not intend to repeat it; nor does he think it desirable for every Christian to attempt it. But from various references he made

[1] It is only fair to point out that many Hindus regard fasting less as an ascetic discipline than as a means of enhancing spiritual perception.

to it we drew the conclusion that it was a crisis in his spiritual development. We should have been tempted to describe it, in the technical language of mystical theology, as the transition from the "Illuminative" to the "Unitive" stage; but the very slight indications of anything corresponding to the intervening stage known as the "Dark night of the Soul"—a point we shall return to in a later chapter—would make the analogy misleading. Again, if it were legitimate to exclude the Epistles of the Captivity from a characterisation of St. Paul, we might speak of the transition as being one from a Pauline to a Johannine type of experience. But this would be in some respects equally misleading. The Sadhu's personality is sufficiently individual to have marched towards maturity along individual lines.

The period that followed the Fast is notable as one in which he endured an extremity of persecution, especially in Tibet; and also experienced some remarkable deliverances which he is himself inclined to regard as most probably due to angelic intervention. With some difficulty the Sadhu was induced, at a small gathering at the Pusey House, Oxford, to give his own version of one of the most striking of these incidents. We quote the story as given by Mrs. Parker, indicating in a footnote the only differences, not

purely verbal, which we have noted between the two accounts.

"At a town called Rásár he was arrested and arraigned before the head Lama on the charge of entering the country and preaching the Gospel of Christ. He was found guilty, and amidst a crowd of evil-disposed persons he was led away to the place of execution. The two favourite forms of capital punishment are, being sewn up in a wet yak skin and put out in the sun until death ends the torment, or being cast in the depths of a dry well, the top being firmly fastened over the head of the culprit.[1] The latter was chosen for the Sadhu.

"Arrived at the place he was stripped of his clothes and cast into the dark depths of this ghastly charnel-house with such violence that his right arm was injured. Many others had gone down this same well before him, never to return, and he alighted on a mass of human bones and rotting flesh. Any death seemed preferable to this. Wherever he laid his hands they met putrid flesh, while the odour, almost poisoned him. In the words of his Saviour he cried, 'Why hast Thou forsaken me?'

"Day passed into night, making no change in

[1] These methods are an ingenious attempt to evade the Buddhist law which forbids a true disciple to kill. Similarly in Ceylon I was shown the precipice over which condemned criminals were pushed in the old kingdom of Kandy—also a Buddhist state.—B. H. S.

the darkness of this awful place and bringing no relief by sleep. Without food or even water the hours grew into days, and Sundar felt he could not last much longer. On the third night, just when he had been crying to God in prayer, he heard a grating sound overhead. Some one was opening the locked lid of his dismal prison. He heard the key turned and the rattle of the iron covering as it was drawn away. Then a voice reached him from the top of the well, telling him to take hold of the rope that was being let down for his rescue. As the rope reached him he grasped it with all his remaining strength, and was strongly but gently pulled up from the evil place into the fresh air above.

"Arrived at the top of the well the lid was drawn over again and locked. When he looked round, his deliverer was nowhere to be seen, but the pain in his arm was gone and the clean air filled him with new life. All that the Sadhu felt able to do was to praise God for his wonderful deliverance, and when morning came he struggled back to the town, where he rested in the serai until he was able to start preaching again. His return to the city and his old work was cause for a great commotion. The news was quickly taken to the Lama that the man they all thought dead was well and preaching again.

"The Sadhu was again arrested and brought to

the judgement seat of the Lama, and being questioned as to what had happened he told the story of his marvellous escape. The Lama was greatly angered, declaring that some one must have secured the key and gone to his rescue; but when search was made for the key and it was found on his own girdle, he was speechless with amazement and fear. He then ordered Sundar to leave the city and get away as far as possible, lest his powerful god should bring some untold disaster upon himself and his people."[1]

To this period belong two incidents which have appealed to the popular imagination.

He discovered the existence of a Christian brotherhood, said to number 24,000 members, commonly spoken of as the "Secret Sannyasi Mission." They appear to have, along with much that is genuinely Christian, some curious, but—if we may judge from those which have been so far divulged—not very interesting or valuable, secret doctrines and traditions. The Sadhu has consorted with them, as with all sects of Christians, in a spirit of sympathy and brotherhood; but he has urged them to come out into the open. To his mind the courage to confess Christ, and the duty

[1] Parker, pp. 64 ff. In speaking to us he said his arm was "struck with a club and almost broken" before he was thrown down; also the rope had a loop at the end, in which he put his foot, otherwise with his injured arm he could not have supported his weight. He also strongly emphasised the fact that, along with the horror, pain and despair, he felt all along an immense accession of inward joy and peace.

to bear witness to Him, are of the essence of true Christianity.

Later, in a cave 13,000 feet above sea-level on the Kailash range of the Himalayas, he found an ancient rishi or hermit—the "Maharishi of Kailash." The Rishi gave the Sadhu a marvellous account of his own immense age and wonderful powers and adventures, and also imparted to him a series of visions of an apocalyptic character. The Sadhu was undoubtedly impressed by the personality and communications of this remarkable individual, revisited him more than once, and reported what he had seen and heard to many people in India. Unfortunately, but perhaps not unnaturally, popular interest, attracted by the more bizarre elements in the story, has concentrated on this picturesque hermit in a way that has latterly caused some embarrassment to the Sadhu, who is frequently bombarded with queries about him and his revelations. "People have made too much of this incident in my life," he said to us in Oxford. "The Maharishi is a man of prayer, and I have a great respect for him; but my work is, not to preach the Rishi, but to preach Christ."

We have spoken of this period in the life of the Sadhu as that in which he attained to spiritual maturity—so far, that is to say, as such a thing can properly be said of any man still alive. It

will be convenient, therefore, to call attention to the three outstanding features of his inward life —his Philosophy of the Cross, if we may so name his characteristic orientation towards suffering; the ineffable Peace which belongs to his mystical experience of the presence of Christ; his times of Ecstasy. These, though all present, and indeed conspicuous, before the Fast, appear now to have taken on an enhanced intensity and persistency.

Already in the autumn of 1906 Mr. Stokes tells how, when he was tending the Sadhu during an attack of fever combined with acute pain in the stomach, he heard him murmur below his breath, "How sweet it is to suffer for His sake." The notion that suffering is a privilege, in so much as it is an opportunity of sharing an experience of Christ and helping on His work, is as fundamental to the Sadhu as it is to St. Paul. There is no doubt that he does literally *rejoice* in bearing pain for Christ's sake. For this reason many have described him as an Ascetic; but, as we shall see later, he quite definitely repudiates the ascetic idea as ordinarily understood. Suffering, not for its own sake, but for the sake of Christ and His work, is what he loves.

"There is nothing like the Cross in all heaven or earth. It was through the Cross that God revealed His love for man. But for the Cross we should have remained ignorant of the Love

of our Heavenly Father. For this reason God desires that all His children should bear this heavy but 'sweet'[1] burden of the Cross, because only through this will our love for God, and His love for us, be revealed to others."

"We shall never get a second opportunity of bearing the Cross after our life on earth ; for we shall never return to this life. So *now* is the time to bear the Cross joyfully : never again will an opportunity be given us of bearing this sweet burden."[2]

"My choice is to work in poverty and simplicity. If offered an archbishopric I should decline."

In the second place, we must notice the unutterable Peace, "Heaven on earth" as he calls it, which flows from his abiding consciousness of the presence of Christ as solace, as companionship, and as power. It is this alone which enables him to translate his Philosophy of the Cross into the actualities of daily life. We shall attempt a description and discussion of it in the chapter entitled "A Mystic's Peace." In the present context it will suffice to record his testimony that this experience has always risen to a

[1] The word "sweet" has not to the Sadhu the sentimental connotation it has in modern English ; both thought and language are influenced by the *Imitation*. Paradoxically as it sounds to the ears of the average man the Sadhu finds an *almost* physical pleasure in suffering in Christ's service.

[2] A. Zahir, *Soul-Stirring Messages*, p. 6.

peculiar intensity at times of acute suffering and persecution. He told us that he especially remembered the intensified Peace of the time he spent awaiting death in the dry well in Tibet, and on another occasion, which we shall speak of later, when he was compelled to spend a day and a night without food or water, his hands and feet in the stocks, and his naked body covered with leeches sucking his blood.

Lastly, there are his times of Ecstasy, which since the Fast have been of more frequent occurrence and have seemed to him richer in content. In these, as he believes, he is rapt up like St. Paul into the Third Heaven, when he sees and hears things unutterable. From these he derives, not only spiritual comfort and illumination, but also physical refreshment and renewed strength. They are described and their nature and value are discussed in a later chapter of this book.

"I believe," said the Sadhu, "that a life of prayer and the inner peace which goes with the Christian life enable one to a large extent to resist disease as well as to endure hunger and hardship. I was surprised when I heard that some of the Mystics suffered considerably in their physical health."

In this connexion the experience of Mr. Stokes is worth quoting. "Before going to

India I was not strong : indeed it was considered questionable whether I could live in the Indian climate even under ordinary conditions. After going to India, but before taking up this work, I had a very bad attack of typhoid fever, with relapses. The doctors—there were two of them——ordered me home, and assured me that I would be dead within fourteen months if I did not obey them. Feeling that I could not leave the work, I remained; and yet I lived and have been stronger ever since. As a matter of fact it seems to me that we are apt to conclude that many things are impossible before we have ever tested their possibility. The man who suffers against his will speedily becomes a physical wreck ; but if he suffers of his own free will, impelled to do so by his ideal, there is hardly any limit to his powers of endurance. This I have seen in Brother Sundar Singh and in Hindu *bhagats*, and know from what I have myself undergone. The ideal makes the suffering entailed by living up to it a privilege. At home I was placed by my doctor on a diet-list, but as a Friar I have often eaten food which some Indians are afraid to touch. . . . A man's strength is commensurate with the work God gives him to do and his purpose and enthusiasm in undertaking it." [1]

[1] S. E. Stokes, *op. cit.* p. 19.

World Fame

1918–1920

The Sadhu's visit to Madras early in 1918 begins a new epoch in his life, marking as it does the transition from a position of obscurity to one of world-wide reputation. In South India the fame of his activities in the North had preceded him. Thousands flocked to hear him. Among Christians wherever he went a wave of spiritual awakening followed. Non-Christians also were affected, and in one place alone no less than nineteen were converted.

In this connexion we may note the fact that in spite of repeated requests the Sadhu always declines to baptize converts. He always refers them to the regular ministers of the particular denomination which has work on the spot. His own father about this time decided to become a Christian. "You have opened my spiritual eyes," he said, "so you must baptize me." "If I baptize you," replied the Sadhu, "there are hundreds of others whom I must baptize. My work is not to baptize, but to preach the Gospel."

The Sadhu, no doubt, recognises the desirability that baptism should be preceded by a longer course of instruction than could be given by a wandering preacher, and also sees the necessity to the average convert, unless he is

shortly to relapse into his old state, of a direct affiliation to a definite Christian community. But the refusal himself to perform the rite of baptism is probably due, at least in part, to a well-founded apprehension that the uneducated convert might attribute some specific virtue to his personal action. The Hindu readily attributes supernatural powers to a "holy man," fears his curse or implores his blessing as potencies inherent in the man himself. Any such reputation for powers personal to himself the Sadhu is above all anxious to avoid.

We asked him once whether he had ever tried spiritual healing. "Yes," he said, "but I gave it up because I found it made people look to me and not to Christ, and that is a cross I cannot bear. In Ceylon the son of a Christian gentleman was dying, and the doctors had given him up. The mother besought me to come and lay my hands on him and pray for him. I said, 'There is no power in these hands, only in the pierced hands of Christ.' At last I consented to go and see him in the hospital, and prayed for him and put my hand upon his head. Three days later I saw the boy sitting with his mother in the back seat at a meeting I was addressing. Then I found that, however much I impressed upon people that it was not my personal power that had effected the cure, but the power of Christ

in answer to prayer, they insisted on looking upon me as a wonder-worker ; and I saw that I must not do this again, as it would encourage superstition and distract attention from the Gospel I have to preach."

Sundar's aliveness to the evil consequence of purely personal notoriety may be further illustrated by a fact told us by a lady missionary. On the first occasion that he visited the town in Northern India where she worked, he mentioned in his addresses, as he often does by way of illustrating the lesson he is enforcing, some of the remarkable, and, in his own view, supernatural, deliverances which he has experienced. The Indian Christians of the place talked of nothing else for weeks. Three or four years later he visited the same city, but this time he did not mention a single incident of this character.

His preaching tour through the South of India and Ceylon was followed by a similar visit to many of the chief towns in Burma, the Federated Malay States, China and Japan, after which he returned to spend the summer at his usual mission work in Tibet.

In January 1920 he took ship for England. His desire had been to visit Palestine, but he could not obtain a passport ; he left India, however, with the hope that on his way back from England he might be able to do so. In May

he left England for the United States. He was invited to visit Sweden, France and Switzerland on his return to England, but ultimately accepted an invitation to go to Australia instead, and thence back to India.

His principle of travelling from place to place with no money or other provision for the morrow, trusting that whatever is needful the Lord will provide, he still adhered to strictly. To one who raised a doubt whether this side of the "Sadhu-ideal" was practicable in the West, he replied, "God is the same God in the East and in the West." And as a matter of fact no difficulty has occurred. His passage to England was paid by his father, who, as we have mentioned, had lately become reconciled to him; and in England and America friends have naturally found small difficulty in securing hospitality for so remarkable a personage. His host, on seeing him off at the station, hands him a ticket to his next destination. For major expenses, like his passage to America, contributions were collected by friends.

In visiting the West, Sundar had more than one object. He wished to investigate for himself the truth in the statement made to him in India by non-Christians that the West is immoral and that Christianity has ceased there to be a living force; he hoped to hold converse there with

"godly men"; and he felt called himself there also to bear witness to the power of Christ.

The visit has been well worth while. Supporters of missions have felt great encouragement, seeing in him a conspicuous evidence of the Divine benediction on their prayers and labour in past years. Many others have found inspiration in listening to his fresh and vivid presentation of religion, and not a few think of their personal contact with him as a turning-point in their lives. Perhaps, too, the effect of this visit to the West in broadening his own outlook and enlarging his own experience may not be inconsiderable nor without influence on the future development of Christianity in India.

In the streets of a Western city the saffron robe and turban are conspicuous. But anywhere he is a figure to attract attention. Erect, somewhat above middle height, with black hair and beard, light olive complexion, a Syrian-looking face with soft dark eyes, his calm of mien and bearing and firm peaceful dignity of stride make him, even apart from robe and turban, look, as some one put it, "as if he had stepped straight out from the pages of the Bible." The story is told that once, when calling at a certain house, the door was opened to him by a little maid fresh from a distant country village. He gave the name "Sadhu Sundar Singh." She rushed off

to her mistress. "There's some one wants to see you, ma'am. I can't make anything of his name. But he looks as if it might be Jesus Christ."

Being naturally of a retiring disposition, he frequently in public places wears a raincoat over his robe to avoid attracting notice. When possible he shuns buses or crowded trains, preferring to walk or, on occasion, to go by cab. Nevertheless he always takes in good part the way in which he and his unfamiliar garb are stared at; and he is never in the least put out by the vociferous and sometimes none too courteous attentions of children in the streets. When at Birmingham he was taken to see over Cadbury's Chocolate Works. Asked afterwards how he had enjoyed what he had seen; "I enjoyed myself," he said, "but I think the girls and men working in the factory enjoyed themselves more looking at me." "You ought to have charged them something for it," put in a friend. "Yes, yes," said the Sadhu, smiling, "but then they gave me so much chocolate I could not eat my dinner that day." Such flashes of humour are not infrequent with him; and, like the Mediæval Saints, he disregards at times conventional reverences. After an ascent of the Eiffel Tower with its three floors he remarked, "You can say now that you have been to the third heaven, like St. Paul."

People who invite the Sadhu to a meal will often enquire beforehand whether he has any restrictions as to food. He has none. " Anything at any time " is the principle he often reaffirms. He is equally ready to sit down to a good dinner, well served and well appointed, or to eat the plainest fare, or, if necessary, to do without. And if coffee or sweets are offered to the company he does not disdain them.

" England is not cold enough for me," was his remark to some who were afraid that in his thin clothes he would feel the rigours of the climate. Tibet has inured him to extreme cold. Once he remarked that he would not wear even sandals—in India he never does so—but that friends had suggested to him that in English houses ladies might be solicitous about carpets and the dirt which, if he walked barefoot, he might bring in. Accordingly he wore sandals in the streets, but usually, in oriental fashion, slipped them off when entering a room.

Affectionate to friends, courteous and considerate to all, a lover of animals—we marked how almost tenderly he stroked a little dog that craved his notice—he struck every one who met him as the embodiment of peace, gentleness and loving-kindness.

To awake suddenly and find oneself a " star turn " in London or New York is an experience

that may easily demoralise even those who know enough of Western civilisation to discount and assign to its proper value the quality and depth of the popular enthusiasm it implies. Not a few of the Sadhu's well-wishers naturally, but, as we believe, quite unnecessarily, felt some apprehension that, to use a current phrase, he might "be spoilt."

The adulation of the Church may be harder to withstand than the hostility of the World. But the Sadhu is not ignorant of the human soul. "We must follow Christ with our eyes steadily fixed on Him, but with both our ears closed. For on the one side we may hear flattering remarks which might make us proud; on the other side we may hear criticism or slander which might make us despond." "People write about me," he said to Baron von Hugel, "but they don't point out my defects, so that I may remedy them." The fact that Mrs. Parker's book was on sale at a certain shop was once mentioned in his presence. "It is not good," he said, "that a man's biography should be written in his lifetime." Indeed, it was only on the express understanding that this book of ours was to be, not another biography, but an attempt to interpret his message to the West, and so perhaps do something in the way of following up his preaching, that he consented to provide us with materials for the undertaking.

The bustle and roar of life in Western cities visibly jarred upon and wearied one constitutionally a lover of outdoor nature and of the contemplative life. Even in India he dislikes large towns. He always feels the spirit of evil to be peculiarly powerful there. "To go into big towns is always against my desire, and I have to constrain myself to do so, but I was told once in an Ecstasy that the present life is the only opportunity that will be given me for helping others in this world. That is a privilege which even Angels are not allowed. We shall have Heaven for ever, but we have only a short time for service here, and therefore must not waste the one opportunity. I know why hermits prefer to live in caves and mountains. I much prefer it myself."

At table, in Oxford, some one asked him point-blank what he thought of English Christianity and English life. He clearly found a difficulty in expressing his views in a way that would not seem discourteous to his hosts, saying he had not seen enough as yet to enable him to give an opinion, but that it seemed to him too little was made of the aspect of religion as peace of soul. "Spiritual things cannot be discerned without quiet and meditation;" then, perfectly naturally, he fell into a discourse on the Peace of God and the lack of it in English life and in English

religion, which none of those who heard it will soon forget.

A letter of the Sadhu's to a friend in India is more explicit. "Many people are surprised to see me in my simple dress with no socks or boots on my feet. But I told them that I love simplicity and that wherever I go I want to live in the same way as I live in India, not changing my colour like a chameleon. I have been in England only two weeks and so cannot speak with much confidence of my impressions. But I feel that, just as the Sun is seldom to be seen on account of fogs and mist, so the Sun of Righteousness is almost always hidden by the fogs and mist of materialism. . . . Many people, especially those who have received blessing from the meetings, tell me that more missionaries from India are needed."

On the other hand, he told an Indian friend that, in spite of the English people being so materialistic, he had found many spiritual people among them. And he expressed a very definite dissent from the suggestion that India had no more to learn from Western missionaries. Indeed he regarded the missionary interest and activity as the most vitalising force in Western Christianity.

In America this two-sided impression of the West seems to have deepened—at least he gave it

a more public expression. "Christ would say here, 'Come unto Me all ye that are heavy gold-laden, and I will give you rest.'" "Still God's people are all over the world, and He has His own witnesses in the West also."

In America, as in England, wherever he went he was received with enthusiasm, and, as the result of practice, it became less and less difficult for him to address large audiences in the English language. He appreciated the welcome, he formed friendships, and he had reason to believe that his message was not delivered in vain. Yet those with whom he was most intimate felt that he was not quite happy in the West, and saw him growing day by day more restive for the calm of the Himalayas and the severe simplicity of an Indian sadhu's life.

II

A MYSTIC'S CREED

A Christocentric Mysticism

It has been remarked of St. Paul that he was one of the world's great mystics, but that, in contrast to those who aspire to union with the Absolute or with Infinite Reality, his is a mysticism centred in Christ. So it is with the Sadhu. In Ecstasy in every vision Christ is the centre of the scene. In ordinary life, whenever, among friends, he speaks of Christ, the love-light beams from his eyes and his face is transfigured —as sometimes in supreme moments a woman's is, gazing on her beloved. Seeing him, one knows why a Christian has been defined as one "who has fallen in love with Christ."

Once grasp the Christocentric character of his mysticism, and you have the key to the understanding of his teaching, his character and his whole way of life.[1] The Divine, apprehended

[1] Of course all specifically Christian mysticism is directed towards Christ, but the influence of Neo-Platonism has often given it a metaphysical direction foreign to the direct, concrete simplicity of conception in mystics like St. Francis, Mother Juliana, or the Sadhu.

in and as the Eternal Christ, elicits in him a passion and a devotion not possible to the mystic to whose imagination absolute Reality takes on a less vividly concrete and personal form. That is why he is a missionary, although his own natural bent would be towards the hermit's life of contemplation in solitary mountain caves. The love of Christ constrains him. "Lovest thou me more than these?" . . . "Feed my lambs." That, too, is the reason why he so often urges that religion is not of the head but of the heart —not metaphysical comprehension but personal devotion, not the Vision of Reality but the love of One who saves. And it is mainly because of this that we have ventured to assert that some who have known the Sadhu feel that they understand the better the inner life of two greater men, St. Francis and St. Paul.

We quote an article dictated by him, when, having seen with his own eyes London, Oxford and Paris—famous cities symbolising to his mind Western thought and civilisation in its diverse aspects—he summed up for a Western magazine[1] what he felt to be his special message. If only we had it in his native tongue it would read like a hymn in prose form.

"Christ is my Saviour. He is my life. He is everything to me in heaven and earth. Once

[1] Cf. *The Foreign Field*, June 1920.

while travelling in a sandy region I was tired and thirsty. Standing on the top of a mound I looked for water. The sight of a lake at a distance brought joy to me, for now I hoped to quench my thirst. I walked toward it for a long time, but I could never reach it. Afterwards I found out that it was a mirage, only a mere appearance of water caused by the refracted rays of the sun. In reality there was none. In a like manner I was moving about the world in search of the water of life. The things of this world—wealth, position, honour and luxury—looked like a lake by drinking of whose waters I hoped to quench my spiritual thirst. But I could never find a drop of water to quench the thirst of my heart. I was dying of thirst. When my spiritual eyes were opened I saw the rivers of living water flowing from His pierced side. I drank of it and was satisfied. Thirst was no more. Ever since I have always drunk of that water of life, and have never been athirst in the sandy desert of this world. My heart is full of praise.

"His presence gives me a Peace which passeth all understanding, no matter in what circumstances I am placed. Amidst persecution I have found peace, joy and happiness. Nothing can take away the joy I have found in my Saviour. In home He was there. In prison He was there. In Him the prison was trans-

formed into Heaven, and the cross into a source of blessing. To follow Him and bear His cross is so sweet and precious that, if I find no cross to bear in Heaven, I shall plead before Him to send me as His missionary, if need be to Hell, so that there at least I may have the opportunity to bear His cross. His presence will change even Hell into Heaven. As the dumb man cannot express the sweetness of sweetmeats, even so a saved sinner cannot express the sweetness of His presence in his heart. Only a heavenly language can give adequate expression to this heavenly Peace. Even though I am in the midst of danger, temptation, sin and sorrow of this world, through Him who gave His life I am saved. The sea is salty and the fish lives all its life in it. But it never gets salty, because it has life. Even so if we receive life from Him, though in the world we are not of the world. Not only here, but also in Heaven we shall find ourselves in Him.

"Now I have no desire for wealth, position and honour. Nor do I desire even Heaven. But I need Him who has made my heart Heaven. His infinite love has expelled the love of all other things. Many Christians cannot realise His precious, life-giving presence, because for them Christ lives in their heads or in their Bibles, not in their hearts. Only when a man

gives his heart shall he find Him. The heart is the throne for the King of Kings. The capital of Heaven is the heart where that King reigns."

Obviously the man who can speak and feel like this, has little need of a systematical theology with all its metaphysical implications carefully thought out. Besides, he thinks in pictures. For him an analogy or illustration is not merely a means to establish an argument; it is often the argument itself. He does not state a general principle and then buttress it with illustration. He puts first the illustrations and then draws out the general principles implied in them. Nor does he seek afterwards to co-ordinate these general principles. The illustrations stand out vivid and striking; but no pains are taken to present them so as to cohere into a system, even though the thought which they illustrate has an inner coherence of its own. And the teaching of the Sadhu *has* such coherence; not because he aims at system, but because his teaching is the spontaneous expression of prolonged meditation on the New Testament by a man whose own personality has attained to inward unity.

But precisely because the Sadhu is not a systematic theologian but a man who thinks in pictures, it will be of considerable interest to see the vivid and effective way in which the cardinal doctrines of Christianity present themselves to

his mind. What we shall find is, in effect, the Johannine theology translated into parable.

The Trinity—A Vision

"At one time I was a good deal perplexed about the doctrine of the Trinity. I had thought of three separate Persons sitting as it were on three thrones; but it was all made plain to me in a Vision. I entered in an Ecstasy into the third heaven. I was told that it was the same to which St. Paul was caught up. And there I saw Christ in a glorious spiritual body sitting on a throne. Whenever I go there it is the same. Christ is always in the centre, a figure ineffable and indescribable. His face shining like the sun, but in no way dazzling, and so sweet that without any difficulty I can gaze at it—always smiling a loving glorious smile. I felt when first I saw Him as if there were some old and forgotten connexion between us, as though He had said, but not in words, 'I am He, through whom you were created.' I felt something the same, only far more intensely, as I felt when I met my father again after an interval of many years. My old love came back to me; I knew I had been his before.

"The first time I entered Heaven I looked round about and I asked, 'But where is God?'

And they told me, 'God is not to be seen here any more than on earth, for God is Infinite. But there is Christ, He is God, He is the Image of the Invisible God, and it is only in Him that we can see God, in Heaven as on earth.' And streaming out from Christ I saw, as it were, waves shining and peace-giving, and going through and among the Saints and Angels, and everywhere bringing refreshment, just as in hot weather water refreshes trees. And this I understood to be the Holy Spirit."[1]

The Incarnation

"The Word of Life was made flesh; the Word came into flesh. I used to think: Where is the need that God should become incarnate and take the form of man? When I was not a Christian I used to criticise this doctrine. There are many thousands who do not find any intellectual difficulty in believing in the Incarnation but who yet cannot understand its need. Often, however, they find in their hearts a great desire to see God; man has a natural desire to see God. We want to see Him whom we are trying to worship; but He is infinite. I say to idol worshippers: 'Why do you worship these idols?' They say,

[1] Elsewhere, it is clear that the Sadhu does not conceive the Spirit as impersonal.

'God is infinite and these idols are only meant to help us concentrate our minds; by means of these symbols we can worship, we can understand something.' Him we love we want to talk to, we want to see Him. The difficulty is, we cannot see God because He is infinite. If ever some time we should become infinite, we may then see the infinite God. Here and now we are unable to see Him, our Creator, our Father, the Giver of Life. That is why He became incarnate. He took human form, limited form, that in this way men might see Him."

In the address in Balliol College Hall, from the opening words of which the preceding paragraph is taken, there followed two homely illustrations from Indian life.

"When I was in the Himalayas once I wanted to cross the River Sutlej, but there was no bridge. I could not swim over. I was thinking of what I should do, when I saw a man and I said to him: 'I would like to go to the other side of the river but there is no bridge or boat.' He said, 'That is all right, air will take you over.' I was surprised. I could breathe air, but air could not bear me up and take me to the other side. But he took a skin and filled it with air, and then asked me to support myself on it. I did so and got safely across. As the air could only carry me by being confined in

the skin, so God to help man had to become incarnate. The Word of Life was made flesh. He will carry those who want to cross the river of this world to heaven. 'He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father.' We can see the living Father in that Incarnation of Jesus Christ.

"On another occasion, I remember, in Kashmir, there was a man who owned several hundred sheep. His servants used to take these sheep out for feeding, and each evening as they brought them back they found two or three missing. He asked his servants to go and look for them, but for fear of wild beasts they did not trouble themselves about them. The owner had a love for them and wanted to save them. 'If I go myself searching for these sheep they will not recognise me, as they have not seen me before. They would recognise my servants, but the servants will not go. So I must become like a sheep.' He took a sheep's skin and put it on himself and looked like a sheep. He went out and found some that had gone astray and some that had been wounded. They readily followed him, thinking that he was a sheep like one of themselves.[1] He

[1] The Sadhu said this actually occurred. A shepherd whom I consulted told me he could quite believe it, as it is a regular practice, if a lamb dies, to tie a strip of its wool on to another lamb—whose dam is dead or has too many lambs to suckle—and the ewe takes to it at once. Recognition and the feeling of familiarity is with animals as much a matter of smell as of sight. Crossing the Sutlej by water-skin is not unusual. Cf. *Autobiography of Devendranath Tagore*, p. 257.—B. H. S.

brought them in and sat with them and fed them. When he had saved all the sheep and brought them home, then he took off the sheep skin. He was not sheep but man. He became a sheep in order to save those lost sheep. So God is not man, He became man in order to save men."

In the Tamil addresses we find this parable.

"There was a King. His Grand Vizier was a learned and saintly man. When travelling in Palestine the Vizier was deeply moved as he heard about Christ, and became a Christian. When he returned home he told the people that he was a Christian, and that he believed in the Saviour who came to this world to save sinners. The King said to him: 'If I want anything to be done, I tell my servant and it is done. Then why should the King of Kings who is able to save men by a word come to this world Himself and become incarnate?' The Vizier asked for a day of grace before giving his answer to the question. He sent for a skilled carpenter and asked him to make a doll and dress it up exactly like the one-year-old son of the King, and to bring it to him the next day. The next day the King and his Minister were in a boat together, and the King asked him for an answer to his question. At the same time the carpenter came and stood on the shore with his doll. The King stretched out his arm to

receive the child, who, he thought, was his own child. According to instructions previously given by the Vizier, the carpenter let the doll fall into the water. The King at once jumped into the water to rescue the drowning child. After a while the Vizier said : 'O King, you needed not to leap into the water. Was it not enough to bid me do it ? Why should you yourself jump in ?' The King reflected : 'It was a father's love.' The Vizier said : 'Love was also the reason why, in order to save the world, the all-powerful God became incarnate instead of doing it by His mere word.'"

The Atonement

One day we asked the Sadhu how he understood the language of the New Testament about our being saved by the blood of Christ. He replied with a story. "Once, in Burma, preaching the Gospel of Christ, I said, 'He died to save sinners.' 'How ?' they said. But there was a young man present who said, 'It is true.' I thought this man must be a Christian, but when I spoke to him he said he had never heard of Christ. He said, 'It is quite true. By the death of this Man others could be saved.' I said, 'How ?' He said, 'By the death of my father I have been saved. One day on these mountains I slipped and fell down and lost my

blood through the wound. When my father heard about it he took me to the hospital.

'"He is at the point of death," said the doctor.

'"He is my only son," said my father.

'"It is impossible to save him, his life is going. He has lost too much blood—nothing can be done," continued the doctor.

'"If there is anything that can be done I am willing to do it," said my father.

'"If anybody is willing to give his blood I can save him," said the doctor.

'"I am willing to give my life and blood," said my father.

'It was done, I lived and my father died, and by the death of my father I have been saved.'

"Just so," continued the Sadhu, "I had fallen on the mountain; I had lost my spiritual blood. Life had gone and I was on the point of death. The Saviour injected His own blood into me—He poured out His life and I was saved. Those who are willing to give their hearts will understand how true it is that by the death of Jesus Christ they can be saved. I have found it to be true in my experience. If you want to save life you have to give life."

A most quaint illustration followed which, we understood him to say, was communicated to him in a vision. "There was a case in

South India where, under similar circumstances, the blood of a cat was introduced into a man's veins, with the result that he subsequently showed many of the qualities of the cat, such as spitefulness. This illustrates the way in which the infusion of life from another being can change the character of the person into whom it is infused."

"They told me also in the same vision that it is only by being grafted into Christ that we produce good fruit. Other religions say, 'Do good and you will become good.' Christianity says, 'Be in Christ, and you will do good.' The meaning of the Atonement and the Blood that washes away our sins is that we are grafted into Christ, I in Him, and He in me. It is a bitter sprig which is grafted into the tree, but, once it is grafted in, the sweet juice of the tree flows through the bitter sprig and makes it sweet."

The preceding illustrations are along the line of the conception so prominent in St. John's Gospel that salvation is by participation in the divine life. The parable which follows illustrates the somewhat different conception of *ransom* applied in the Gospels to the death of Christ.

"Two young men were gambling. It was a law of their land that those who gambled were liable to a fine of five hundred rupees. The Government officers found them gambling and made them prisoners. Of these two, one was

the son of a wealthy man ; the other was the son of a poor peasant. Five hundred rupees were immediately paid for the wealthy boy — he was released from the prison. What could the poor boy do ? As he could not pay the fine, he remained in prison. To get enough money to pay the fine, his mother toiled all day long, carrying stones. Stones would fall upon her hands and cut her and make the blood flow. Through the window of his prison the young man saw his mother's hands and asked : 'Mother, what is this wound in your hand ? What is this blood on your finger ?' 'I am working like this to save you,' said the mother, and explained in detail the work she did. At last she saved five hundred rupees and freed her son from the prison. Then one day the rich young man saw him and invited him to a game of dice. 'I can never do that hereafter. Your release came easily, but I was saved by my mother's hard work, by her toil, by the wounds on her body, by her blood. In the future I shall not even look at this game which has brought such suffering to my mother.' Those who, like the rich young man, think that salvation from sin will come easily, have no strength to abandon sin. But those who realise that God became incarnate and shed His precious blood to save us from our sins, will not like to commit the sin which gives such suffering to their God."

Here is a parable suggesting rather the Abelardian conception of the appeal of self-sacrificing love. "There was a young man who led a bad life, he rebelled against his father and ran away from home, and finally joined a gang of dacoits. At home he had a brother who loved him very much. His father expressed the wish, if it were possible, to convey to the erring brother his willingness to forgive him. Nobody ventured on account of the danger of the jungle. At last the brother offered to do so, and the father gave him as message the fact of his continued love for his erring child, and also sent him some presents to convince him of his fatherly love and goodwill. On the way he fell into the hands of dacoits, who robbed him of the money and valuables, and mortally wounded him. He said to them, 'I don't mind your seizing all I have ; only take me to your leader,' which they did. His brother recognised him by his voice, and when he saw his wounds he was 'smitten to the heart.' 'I have,' said the wounded brother, 'brought you a message from your father ; he loves you still ; he has never ceased to love you ; if you return now, he will forgive you. This is the object of my coming, and now I am prepared to die.' And so he gave his life for his brother. The dacoit repented and went back to his father, and ever remembered and mourned over the

brother who had given his life for him. So has Jesus done for us. Many do not understand all that this means for us. Has it really got as far as your hearts yet ?"

St. Paul's metaphor of "the wall of partition" has evidently suggested the following :

"Some time ago I saw on the Himalayas two villages that had been separated by a very high and inaccessible mountain. The direct distance from one village to the other was not great, but as travellers had to go round the mountain, walking over it being impossible, the journey took a week. A man lived in one of those villages who resolved that, if a road could not be made over the mountain, then it ought to be made through it. He resolved to lay down even his life in an attempt to cut a way through. He set to work ; but, alas, before it was finished he was killed. He laid down his life in an attempt to unite the two villages. I thought of this as an illustration of the wall of sin, and of how Jesus Christ has made a way through it by giving His life—as St. Paul says, 'Ye who were sometimes afar off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.'"

The idea of the death of Christ as being merely or mainly a propitiatory sacrifice seems not to occur in the Sadhu's preaching ; or, if it does, to have little organic connexion with his deepest thought on the subject. To him, Hell and

Judgement await the unrepentant as the result of an automatic internal process, they are not an expression of the Divine wrath. For he thinks of God only in terms of Christ, and "Jesus Christ is never annoyed with any one."

Mystical Union with Christ

"India," reiterates the Sadhu with passionate conviction, "has no need of missionaries to teach a Christ who is merely a great moral teacher and not also the Lord of life." To most of us the name Christ suggests primarily the historic Jesus —in and through whom we see, as it were, the face of God invisible. But in all ages the Christocentric Mystic is one who thinks first of an Eternal Divine Being whom now he knows and loves, and only in the second place of the Man who ate and drank and taught in Galilee.

"There are those who speak of Christ as the Supreme Mystic; what," he was asked, "would you say to that?" "That is the tendency of those who are not inclined to accept the divinity of Christ. Christ is not the supreme mystic; He is the Master of mystics, the Saviour of mystics."

"Christ is not only an historical figure but one who lives and works to-day. He lives not merely in the Bible but in our hearts." "An

Indian Christian, who had travelled widely, said once: 'I saw Muhammad's tomb. It was very splendid, decorated with diamonds and all manner of precious things. And they told me: "Here are Muhammad's bones." I saw Napoleon's tomb and they said: "Here are Napoleon's[1] bones." But when I saw Christ's tomb, it was open. No bones lay there.' Christ is the Living Christ. The tomb has been open thus for nearly two thousand years. My heart is also open to the Lord. He lives in me. He is the living Christ because He lives in the lives of Christians. Real Christians are not those who profess, but those who possess, Christ.

"Some say that salvation consists in being absorbed in God. We Christians say that to live in Christ is already heaven. We are to live in Him and He in us. How can this be? When a ball of iron is thrown into the fire it becomes red-hot. The iron is in the fire and the fire is in the iron, and yet the iron is not the

[1] When in Paris the Sadhu, who ordinarily has little taste for sight-seeing, showed a special anxiety to see the tomb of Napoleon, but twice found the chapel closed, and he enquired assiduously whether and how his body and bones had come from St. Helena. This interest in Napoleon, of which there is other evidence, is probably due mainly to his reflexions on the contrast which Napoleon himself drew between the empires founded by Alexander, Cæsar and himself, which were founded on force and therefore perished, and the empire of Christ, which, being founded on love, is imperishable.

fire and the fire is not the iron. In the same way we live in Christ and He lives in us and yet we do not become gods.

"Consider the air we breathe. The air is our life, yet man is not the air, nor the air man. In like manner we breathe God's Spirit, but we are not God. Just as we draw in the air by breathing, we can inhale the Blessed Spirit by prayer. Not only do we draw near to God, but we are united with Him. This is not only union but life, and when we have this life we see the marvellous love of God.

"The planets have no light in themselves. They shine with light which they have borrowed from the sun. Christians are like them. In themselves they have no light, but they shine with light borrowed from the Sun of Righteousness.

"The Church is called 'the body of Christ' because the relation between Christ and Christians is not that between a master and his servants. It is more than that. Christians are Christ's own parts. They are not only friends of Christ, they are Christ Himself. He breathes through them.

"Christ is always present in the Church, but unseen. Wherever men feel in their hearts a feeling of reverence, this is a dim recognition of His presence. But Christ never interferes with

our freedom so as to compel us to feel His presence. He allows us to do so according to our capacity. Indeed He never interferes with us here in any way by compulsion, only by attraction.

" We see medicine for the eye. We see it so long as it is before us. But when it is dropped in the eye, it cools the eye and cleanses it, but we cannot see it with the eye. In the same way we cannot see the Saviour who cleanses our heart and makes it rejoice with His presence.

" The Christian has eternal life because the God to whom he is united is Eternal."

III

A MYSTIC'S PEACE

The Peace of God

To have spent an hour with Sundar Singh is to have received an unforgettable impression of calm and joy. " The peace of God " shines in his face and seems by his mere presence to be diffused around. To him Heaven has already begun on earth ; and he would have it so for others also. It was, he believes, of this experience that St. Paul spoke (Eph. ii. 6), " He made us to sit with him in heavenly places, in Christ Jesus." The existence of this Peace, this " Heaven on earth," and the possibility of attaining it, are to the Sadhu of the essence of the Christian message. And potentially it is a gospel for all men. A sentence by Miss Evelyn Underhill [1] would exactly express his attitude: " Without being geographers we can enter into the spirit of landscape, and without being philosophers or theo-

[1] Cf. *Church Congress Addresses*, 1920.

logians we can enter into Heaven, if we start in the right direction ; for Heaven is a Temper, most simply understood as awareness of the indwelling Christ."

This Peace took hold of him from the moment of his conversion. " When I was converted by the vision of Christ a power like electricity entered my soul and took possession of it." He naturally expected to find other Christians enjoying this Peace, and not merely that but being transformed by its influence. His expectations were not fulfilled. " Have you been disappointed with Christians ? " " Yes," said the Sadhu, " I was at first. I had thought they must be wonderful if they possessed this wonderful peace." But long ago he has discovered that Christians as well as others need to learn its secret. " It is a wonderful peace. I wish I could show you this peace. It is impossible, because people cannot see that wonderful peace. We cannot tell others : there are no words to express that peace, but those who have had their spiritual eyes opened can understand it." The inadequacy of his knowledge of the English language, about which he often speaks, is not the difficulty here. " I have no words, even in my own language, to express that wonderful peace." " It is not the sort of thing you can show others : it is a hidden peace." But what mystic ever has found

language adequate to describe experience? Indeed, William James would make "ineffability" one of the four characteristic marks of mysticism.[1]

The Sadhu constantly emphasises how entirely different are the peace and joy of which he speaks from the enjoyments of wealth and home in his younger days. "The luxuries of home could not give me that peace." "My soul is like an ocean. On the surface there may be waves and tempests, but deep down there is undisturbed calm." When he sees the sin and suffering of men he is sore troubled, but in the depths of his nature Peace still remains. During his early years as a Christian he was so struck by the unusual character of this Peace that he thought it might be, to quote his own somewhat obscure expression, "some hidden power of his life"—meaning, no doubt, some undetected physiological or psychological idiosyncrasy in his constitution; or, again, that it might be in some unexplained way the effect of self-hypnotism. One result, as we have seen, of the great Fast was to clear away this doubt and to convince him that it was a peace born of heaven.

But this Peace is a thing which, though hard to explain, it is possible to attain. "This world is full of sorrow; our body is the abode of misery. This being so, many argue that so long

[1] Cf. *Varieties of Religious Experience*, p. 380.

as we are in this world possessed of this body heavenly joy is impossible. Once on the Himalayas I said to another traveller, 'Here are some hot springs.' He thought I was mad and said, 'It is a lie to say that in this cold place where even water freezes there are hot springs.' I took hold of him and led him and made him dip his hand in a certain spring. Then by means of personal experience he realised the truth of what I had said. Then he tried to offer a scientific reason for the fact. In the same way, only by personal experience can we know that even in this world full of sorrow we can have a heavenly joy." "I met a man in Tibet who was a wonderful man. He showed me his scars when he took off his clothes. He said he was so happy in being persecuted for Christ's sake; and he told me the story of his conversion. 'When I first saw a man martyred,' he said, 'it made me think over these spiritual things. He was being tortured to death by being exposed to the sun sewn up into a wet yak's skin, and as I saw him I thought, "What is that thing in his life that makes him so happy?" The Lama said, "There must be an evil spirit in him." "If an evil spirit can give such a wonderful thing," I said, "I pray to God to give me that same evil spirit." It made me think about it and I became a Christian. The martyr's

name was Kartar Singh. He showed such wonderful peace and joy in the midst of torture that his persecutors cut out his heart to find the exact nature of that peace, but they found only a piece of flesh.' "

Christians who do not appropriate to themselves this wonderful treasure of peace and joy which is within their reach are like a beggar whom the Sadhu heard of in Nepal some years ago. " The man had been a beggar for twenty-one years. His ambition had been to become a rich man and yet he had died poor. After his death it was discovered that under the spot where he had sat and begged for twenty-one years was a buried treasure, containing jewels and other valuables which had belonged formerly to a king. The beggar had not been aware of the endless riches over which he had been sitting. Even so there are many Christians who go through life without enjoying the peace and happiness which are accessible to them in Christ Jesus.

" People who have received that peace and joy and happiness do not need to be told to go and tell others ; they cannot keep quiet. There are many Christians to whom I say, ' Why don't you go and tell of Jesus Christ to others ? If you have seen something, you cannot keep quiet."

The terms " peace," " joy " and " happiness,"

used by the Sadhu when speaking in English about the nature of this experience, are not, we elicited by a question, intended to express three different kinds of feeling. In the Tamil addresses only two, peace and joy, are mentioned. What he speaks of is a single movement of the soul, combining in ineffable harmony a calm, profound and indisturbable, which he names "Peace," and a radiant fullness of life and light which he calls "Joy," and which is to him not only the evidence, but the actuality, of personal union with Christ.

An especially interesting characteristic of this "Peace" is that it is for him a condition of intellectual illumination and the faculty of insight into spiritual problems. "Would you say, Sadhuji," we said to him one day, "that this peace which you have is the same as that which St. Paul describes as the peace which passeth all understanding?" "Yes," he replied, "it is a peace which not merely passeth all understanding but which enlighteneth all understanding."

The Philosophy of the Cross

His Peace—and perhaps this is its most notable feature—not merely abides with him in moments of comparative ease and comfort, but becomes most intense amidst suffering and

persecution. "What is the use," says he, "of a religion which does not help us under trying circumstances?"

On one occasion we asked whether his peculiar experience of Peace had thrown light for him on anything in the Bible. He at once quoted, "I am filled with comfort, I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulations" (2 Cor. vii. 4).

Sometimes, under the sternest circumstances, Peace has been raised to the pitch of exultation. This may be illustrated by an adventure, already cursorily alluded to, which he related when in Oxford. At a certain town he was ordered, under pain of heavy punishment, to give up preaching. He disregarded the threat, with the result that he was seized and cast into the common prison along with a number of murderers and thieves. In such company and in the horrible surroundings of an eastern prison he wrote in the fly-leaf of his New Testament, "Christ's presence has turned my prison into a blessed heaven: what then will it do in heaven hereafter?" He started preaching to his fellow-prisoners, and many heard him gladly and began to turn towards the Christ he preached. The authorities, hearing of this, took him out of the prison and brought him to the market-place for punishment. He was stripped and was forced to sit on the ground all that day and the following

night without anything to eat or drink; his feet and hands fixed in a kind of stocks, and leeches were thrown upon his naked body. A mocking crowd stood round enjoying the spectacle. When the authorities saw him the following morning, still alive and bearing a calm face, they were afraid that he was possessed of some supernatural power and let him go. He fell down unconscious, but after a while came to himself and with the greatest difficulty crawled away and found friends, secretly Christian, who nursed him back to strength. But all the while, he assured us, he enjoyed an experience of intense inward Peace. And Mrs. Parker records that, in telling this same story to her, he added, "I do not know how it was, but my heart was so full of joy that I could not help singing and preaching." [1]

This last incident makes it clear that the real meaning of the Sadhu's Peace cannot be seen except in its relation to his Philosophy of the Cross. Between renunciation and satisfaction there is a psychological connexion which is conditioned by something in the fundamental constitution of human nature. This shows itself in every act of choice. Choice at its lowest level presents the problem, "You cannot both have your cake and eat it"; but until we have

[1] Cf. Parker, p. 55.

made the decision which pleasure to renounce —a decision always irksome to unredeemed humanity—disquiet reigns within. At a higher level than this, the experience of life has taught most of us that peace of mind can be bought only at the price of some renunciations. Only when some alternatives have been resolutely excluded—always a painful process,—and the whole self thus directed along one straight, high road of thought or action, is inner conflict ended. It was of this world, not—at any rate, not in the first instance—of the next, that the words were spoken, "Straight is the gate and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life." Renunciation, however, so long as it is felt as such, involves in itself an element of inner conflict. But remember, the Sadhu is a Christocentric Mystic; realise that to him, as to St. Francis or St. Paul, partnership with Christ is a passion and a privilege, and therefore transforms labour, hardship, loss, from something which is to be accepted negatively as an unfortunate necessity, into something positively to be welcomed for His sake—and you will understand a little of the secret of the Sadhu's Peace. *Si crucem portas portabit te*, "Bear the cross and it will bear thee." It is of his Heaven on earth that he speaks when, recalling this passage of the *Imitation*, he says: "From my fourteen years' experience of life as

a sadhu for Jesus Christ I can say with confidence that the Cross will bear those who bear the Cross until it lifts them up to Heaven into the presence of the Saviour."

The Sadhu has an enthusiasm, one can only call it that, for suffering—not, like the Ascetic, for its own sake, nor for the sake of any spiritual profit he may hope to gain from it, but in the service, in the steps, in the companionship of the Beloved. This explains at once the intense interest he takes in anything connected with martyrs and martyrdom. Like many of the early Christians he would himself prefer a martyr's end. But he longs, not only for the joy of sharing with Christ the extremity of persecution, but also for the opportunity of "bearing witness" to His power and for His cause. The latter motive is shown by a remark of his that once, when bound to a tree in an uninhabited forest and left to die—until released in what he regards as a miraculous manner—he was only sorry that he was going to perish in a way which would prevent his death being an act of public witness for Christ. The importance he attaches to what one might call the "propaganda value" of martyrdom—and did not "martyr" originally mean just "testifier"?—is in a line with his doctrine that suffering is not a thing to be sought for its own sake, as the typical ascetic

thinks, but to be welcomed when it comes in the way of, or as a means of service to, the cause of Christ.

In Paris, when asked what sights he would like to see, he said, "Things connected with martyrs and the religious life of the country." He passed rapidly through the Louvre, but was attracted specially by a picture of St. Sebastian pierced by arrows. He afterwards described that as the best picture in the Louvre. Part of the attraction of Tibet as his special mission-field is, as we have already noticed, the possibility of suffering and martyrdom—Tibet being a closed land to the missionary, unless, like the Sadhu, he is prepared to brave martyrdom at any moment. In his addresses he frequently tells of the suffering of martyrs, especially of pioneers of the Gospel whom he has met or heard of in Tibet. The fact that he anticipates the possibility of a similar fate, and aspires to meet it with the same heroic calm and exuberance of supernatural joy, gives a personal significance to a story like the following.

"There was a Christian in Tibet. When he preached the Gospel the people treated him with contumely. But, undaunted by the persecution, he continued to preach the Gospel. The people took a knife and cut his skin. He was bleeding and they put chili powder and salt into the cuts and wounds. He did not mind the pain which

this caused him, but said: 'Formerly Satan wounded me very much with his fiery darts; but the blood of Jesus healed those wounds. The suffering caused by your wounds is not much.' With a desire to torture him still more, they began to peel off his skin. But he said to them: 'I thank you for this. Take off this old garment. I shall soon put on Christ's garment of righteousness.' Seeing that he was not disheartened, but that, still conscious, he was praising God and was happy, and unable to endure the sight, they cast him into a roaring fire. 'I thank you for throwing me into this fire,' he said, 'for the flames of this fire lift me up high so that I may reach heaven soon.' Then he prayed for his persecutors and died, gladly entrusting his soul to the Father's care."

The Dark Night of the Soul

The literature of mysticism abounds in references to a phase of spiritual experience known as "the dark night of the soul." This is a period of "impotence, blankness, solitude," arising in some mystics from a sense of separation from God, in others from an abrupt conviction of the soul's own hopeless and helpless imperfection, and in still others from a disappearance of all the old ardours. "Such an interval of chaos and

misery may last for months, or even for years, before the consciousness again unifies itself and a new centre is formed."[1] Has the Sadhu had any experience corresponding to the "dark night of the soul"? In reply to this question, the significance of which he at once caught, referring also to the phrase "game of love" used in regard to it by some mystics, he said that sometimes—for a few hours, but never for days or weeks—his soul has been deprived of its wonderful peace and joy. He is glad this has occurred, for two reasons: first, because when he emerges out of the darkness he has a greater joy than ever in the light, and, secondly, because the experience refutes effectively the position that the human and the divine soul are one, for, if they are one, how can they be separated and how can this episode in the soul's life-history take place? "Of course, God does not really abandon the soul. He only hides Himself for a moment. There was a Red Indian boy once who was a coward. His father wanted to teach him bravery. So he took him to the woods and tied him to a tree and left him there all night long. The boy howled in the fear that wild beasts might come and make a prey of him. But the father had not actually left him; he had only hid himself behind a tree, gun in hand, to shoot any wild

[1] Evelyn Underhill, *Mysticism*, p. 462.

beast that might come to attack his son. So does our heavenly Father with us." On another occasion, speaking on the same topic, he said, "Sometimes I felt I had been left alone. Then I began to think: 'I have committed a sin. That is why my peace is taken away.' I wanted to know what that sin was on account of which I had lost my peace. Sometimes we are left alone on account of sin; sometimes we are left alone, not for this cause, but that so we may bear witness for Him more than before."

"Have you ever felt any strain," we asked, "in maintaining your spiritual life?"

"In India there are long spells of rainless heat. After the first rain the heat rises, hot mists form like vapour, and one has a sense of suffocation. After the second, third and fourth showers there is no dust, no feeling of suffocation. So after the first shower of blessing (presumably his conversion) I felt perplexities; but after the second, third and fourth showers of blessing I have felt them no more. This is especially true since the Fast. Since the Fast I get more easily into Ecstasy, but before it I took more delight in the physical joy of the waking state. I was too conscious of the external world and not deep enough in spiritual things. The Fast probably put me in the right way."

Nevertheless, with the Sadhu the experience

of spiritual desolation seems never to have lasted more than a few hours. We put several questions to him on this point to make quite sure we had not misunderstood him. It became clear to us that—unless his recollection was at fault, which, on a point so central to him, is not very likely—right from the time of his conversion he has been comparatively immune from such periods of depression, and since the Fast all but completely so. "If ever I lost my peace I got it back when I began to pray."

IV

A MYSTIC'S WAY

THE MYSTIC AND THE PLAIN MAN

THE Sadhu has no sympathy with the conception of a Mystic as a kind of spiritual aristocrat aloof from the common herd of simple Christians. He has, indeed, as we have seen in the previous chapter, much to say about the ineffable quality of mystic experience ; but he is no less insistent that the communion with the Divine which is its essence is open to every man—needing no rare or special gifts, and demanding no abandonment of the ordinary avocations of life. Especially remarkable is his constant repudiation of the Ascetic ideal which has appealed to so many Mystics, whether Christian or Hindu. To him the mystic way is not the *via negativa* of self-conscious renunciation, but just a simple quiet life of Prayer and self-sacrificing Service.

"You deprecate the title 'ascetic,' you told us ; would you accept that of 'mystic' ?" we asked.

"That is a different matter," said he, "but I do not quite like to describe myself as a mystic. For one thing the ordinary man (here the Sadhu smiled) thinks 'mystic' is something connected with mist, and many even who know better than this are inclined to say of one who claims to be a mystic, 'He may be a very sensible man in most things, but in one thing he is mad.' The true mystic is one who lives with God and knows the mind of God; and very few, even of the greatest saints, have got very far in this. I am only a beginner, a child sucking milk from its spiritual mother. I enjoy it and it gives me strength. I ask no further questions than to be His child. Hence I hesitate to call myself a mystic, just as in India I always try to prevent people calling me 'Swami.'[1] I prefer to be called merely 'Sadhu,' which only means 'religious man.'"

On another occasion we asked, "What about the religion of non-mystical people? Some people appreciate music and some don't. Some appreciate good pictures and some don't. So may not some have the capacity for religion and others not?"

"The capacity for religion," he replied, "is not like the capacity to appreciate art. It is

[1] "Swāmi" means "Lord," and is a title applied in India to gods and holy men.

rather like thirst. Is there any man who does not become thirsty? Just as thirst has been created to make men use water, so the religious thirst has been created to make men come to God."

"But," we objected, "some men surely have a larger spiritual capacity than others. You would say, would you not, that men like Augustine, Luther, Wesley, are more gifted than others?"

"There are physical differences between different men. Some have larger heads than others and some smaller. But I believe that the spiritual capacity in all men is alike. Men like St. Augustine stand out because they have developed their capacity better. They have spent more time and energy on the cultivation of their spiritual life."

Renunciation and Active Service

The Sadhu will not tolerate the suggestion that the cloistered mystics of the Middle Ages lived only for themselves, doing no good to the world. "Did not a monk," he asked, "write the *Imitation of Christ*, which has given priceless counsel to multitudes?" Yet, in spite of the long hours he spends in what to him is the Heaven of communion with Christ, the Sadhu's

own life is predominantly one of active service—busy and exhausting. Asked what he would do with a week, if he had it all to himself, whether he would spend it in prayer and meditation or in active work, he replied in his characteristic way, "Can we drink only water or eat only food for a week? We require both drink and food." He spends weeks together on the Himalayas, but it would be quite a mistake to conclude that he devotes them entirely to prayer and meditation. He rarely has complete days of pure meditation. He preaches the Gospel in the villages that are scattered all over the Himalayas, and meditates when he finds the time.

The practical character of his Christianity may be illustrated by a story which he often [1] tells on account of its extremely literal exemplification of the truth of a favourite text: "Whosoever would save his life shall lose it, and whosoever shall lose his life for My sake shall find it" (Matt. xvi. 25).

Crossing a range of mountains in a heavy snowstorm he was joined by a Tibetan who was afraid of going alone. The cold was so intense that they had already begun to despair of reaching their destination alive, when they saw a man who had slipped down a slope of snow some thirty

[1] He told the story at Mansfield College, Oxford, and we have found no less than three versions of it in print.

feet below the path, lying there unconscious. The Sadhu asked his companion to help him carry the man to the village. The Tibetan, telling him that he was a fool to try to help another when he could barely save himself, left him and hurried on ahead. The Sadhu went down the slope and just managed to get back on to the road again with the man on his shoulders and struggled slowly along. Some distance farther on he perceived his former companion sitting by the wayside. He called, but there was no answer—he was frozen dead. The Sadhu himself meanwhile had become thoroughly warmed by his exertions and, as a result of this warmth and of the friction between their bodies, the man he carried also gradually became warmer and came to ; and both reached the village alive and full of thankfulness.

"It is easy to die for Christ. It is hard to live for Him. Dying takes only an hour or two, but to live for Christ means to die daily. During the few years of this life only I am given the privilege to serve man and Christ. If it were right for me to be in Heaven always I should have been called there, but as I am still left on earth it is my duty to work. This is where I entirely disagree with the Hindu idea of renunciation. I do not call myself a Sannyasi, for a Sannyasi means one who renounces. He renounces the

world because he thinks everything in it is evil, but I think that all is good. The world is all the property of my Father, and is therefore my property.[1] If I renounce the world I renounce some of the gifts which my Heavenly Father gives me out of His Love. Therefore I do not renounce the world, but only the evil in it."

The world is full of difficulty and temptation, but it is not intrinsically bad. "In the Himalayas there is a place where there are beautiful flowers, but if you linger there you go off to sleep. The men who live there always smell another herb before passing the spot, to counteract their power. When they warned me, I supposed the flowers were poisonous; but they told me that they were not actually poisonous, as was proved by the fact that people affected by them did not die till after twelve days, and that not directly from the effect of the flowers, but as a result of the hunger and thirst consequent on their long torpor. Just so, the good things of this world are not in themselves bad, but they may prevent one feeling spiritual hunger and thirst and thus be the cause of spiritual death. And just as there is another herb whose smell prevents one from falling asleep when one passes

[1] In Hindu law property frequently belongs to the family, not to the individual.

these flowers, so the medicine of Prayer will keep one safe amid the attractions of the world." [1]

"Undoubtedly the claims of wealth and position do tend to distract man from the higher life. That is why," says the Sadhu, "few very wealthy people subscribe to Missions. So Rajas have sometimes become Sannyasis. So, too, the Buddha. They thought the good things of this world were in themselves evil, but in reality they are not evil, only they produce evil effects if they are not used properly. I admire some of these Indian kings who have renounced the world, even though their theory is mistaken. I admire their courage in that, once they grasped the effect of these things on them, they were able, after living in state and luxury, to renounce them. One such instance was Bharatri Harish Chandra, King of Ujjain. I saw his magnificent palace, and then, a few miles away, the underground cave to which he retired after his renunciation. The striking contrast of the two brought home to me how impossible it is for the soul to find satisfaction in worldly things. These may be good, but one cannot slake one's spiritual

[1] It is often difficult to be certain when the illustrations given by the Sadhu are drawn from actual life and when they are intended to be taken as merely parables. A certain lady, in whose hearing the Sadhu had used this particular illustration, supposed it was a parable derived from his own fancy, but to her surprise came across a case of a coolie who was sent to sleep for nine days by these flowers, and wrote a letter from India on the subject, which is now in my possession.—B. H. S.

thirst with them. There was once a house on fire; the owner, wanting to quench the flames, took up a vessel full of paraffin. He thought it was water; both water and paraffin spring from the ground. He poured it on the fire, but it only made it worse. The same thing happens when we try to quench the flames of spiritual desire with the good things of this world."

"Do you ever," we asked, "have people say to you, 'It is all very well for you, a sadhu, without a family to support, or a business to carry on, to follow literally the teaching of Christ; but how is this possible for those who have families to bring up, and who have to carry on the world's work—which you yourself say is the life to which the majority of men are called?'" "For all men," he replied, "as long as they live in this world, there will be great difficulties in the way of following Christ. My life is not an easy one. My difficulties are great. So are the difficulties of men who live in the world, though they are not quite of the same kind. But, if we do our best in spite of difficulties, we shall acquire a strength which will enable us at once to achieve great heights the moment we enter the next life where those difficulties will be removed. In olden days men trained themselves for certain races by trying to run in chains. They could not run either easily

or fast in chains, but when, on the day of the race, the chains were thrown aside they found they could run much faster on account of the strength they had developed in the chains."

We returned to the charge, "But business men often say, with some show of justice, that Christianity is not practicable in this world. What, for instance, would you say to a man in business who says that in order to keep his position he has to be dishonest—to say, for example, that a certain material is good when he knows it is not; otherwise his employer would dismiss him?"

"At first," said the Sadhu, "the man may suffer because of his desire to be honest. But soon people will begin to respect him, and God also will prosper him. I knew a merchant in India who suffered because of his honesty. He suffered for two or three years. Then they all began to buy from him when they saw his sincerity and truth; and he became a rich man.

"If a man is really living with Christ, misfortune, sickness, abuse, persecution cannot harm him. On the contrary, he responds to these in such a way that good results both to himself and to others. A boy once threw some stones at a tree and the fruit fell down. His father said, 'You see if you try to hurt the tree it gives you

in return good fruit'; so it is with those who live in Christ."

The Nature of Prayer

Prayer is a theme on which it is possible to say much that is true, but not much that is new. Indeed one would instinctively suspect the soundness of views on this subject which seemed too startlingly original. At any rate the Sadhu has none such to proclaim. His observations on Prayer are on the same high level of "inspired common sense" as those on Service and Renunciation. They are in the main simple, familiar, straightforward maxims illuminated by his special gift for happy illustration. But they are also the expression of an absolute conviction resting upon personal experience, and for that alone would be worth recording.

"How much of your prayer is petition and how much of it is communion?" we asked the Sadhu. "For the first two or three years after my conversion," he replied, "I used to ask for specific things. Now I ask for God. Supposing there is a tree full of fruits, you will have to go and buy or beg the fruits from the owner of the tree. Every day you would have to go for one or two fruits. But if you can make the tree your own property, then all the fruits will be

your own. In the same way, if God is your own, then all things in heaven and on earth will be your own, because He is your Father and is everything to you, otherwise you will have to go and ask like a beggar for certain things. When they are used up, you will have to ask again. So ask not for gifts, but for the Giver of gifts ; not for life, but for the Giver of life—then life and the things needed for life will be added unto you.

"Prayer is not begging, it is communion with God—it is conversing with God. How our life is transformed when we are in the company of a noble friend ! Then how much more will communion with the One who is good beyond all measure transform us !

"When I was travelling in Baluchistan I came to a village, and the water had to be brought three miles to that village. There is no spring or well there. One day there was a certain man whom I met ; he told me everything about it. He had two sons and he asked his sons to go and dig in a certain field, saying, 'There is treasure in that field.' They said, 'We shall find gold and silver there.' So from morning to evening they were digging for three days, but they did not find anything and they went to tell their father. The father said, 'There is a great treasure there ; I am sure you will find it.' On the fourth day they were still digging

and were tired. They said, 'Even if we get gold and silver we cannot quench our thirst. The most important thing is water.' Suddenly a spring of water broke out and the men were so happy. One went to his father to tell him of what he had found. The father said, 'I did not say, "Go and dig for water." I knew you would not go and dig for the whole village; you would say, "Let the villagers go and dig"; but when I said that a treasure was there, you went. My meaning was that you would go for the sake of gold and silver, but would find something more precious than that. When you were digging for that it was a good bodily exercise for you; you found water also.' Prayer is an exercise like digging; it makes one stronger—stronger to deal with temptation. Also by means of it one finds a treasure far more valuable than one set out to seek.

"One day a man who was very hungry knocked at a house and asked for a slice of bread. The owner of the house welcomed him into the house and talked with him about spiritual things until dinner was ready and then he gave him dinner. The stranger's heart was deeply touched by this half-hour's conversation and he was converted and became a child of God. What he sought after was a slice of bread; what he obtained was the salvation of his soul."

Intercession is an important element in the Sadhu's own prayers. "I have two or three hundred god-children. I have a list of their names. When I am on my preaching tours I do not find the time to pray for them. But when on the Himalayas I pray for them all." Incidentally in one of his addresses he gives a glimpse of what this means: "For eight years I was praying for one person I knew and it seemed to me at times almost useless, but after eight years that man began to think and my prayer was answered."

He was convinced that the prayers of various friends in India were really holding him up and helping him in what he regarded as the peculiarly difficult and responsible work of delivering his message in England and in the English language. He always spoke of them with gratitude, and regularly wrote, or more often dictated, for their encouragement accounts of his experiences. When asked to give a Good Friday address in Westminster Chapel, he took special steps to see that news of this meeting—which he regarded as a very important one—should reach India in time for his friends to remember him in prayer on that particular day.

At one time the Sadhu questioned the value of intercessory prayer. "We ourselves are not good. Then how can our prayers help others?"

But the Book of Nature—so abundant in its inspiration to him—has dispelled this doubt. "I saw clouds being formed from the vapour which arose from sea-water. I thought that as the vapour came from salt water the rain which descended would be salt water too. So I stretched out my hand and catching a few drops tasted them, and, behold, they were fresh and sweet. The sun having shone, the salt had been left behind in the sea. So when we pray, thoughts arise up from our hearts like vapour. The Sun of Righteousness shines on them and anything that is evil is left behind. From the clouds thus formed, showers of blessing fall upon the world."

The Necessity of Prayer

"Once I was sitting on the bank of a river and observed some fish coming up to the surface and opening their mouths. I thought that they wanted to eat the smaller fish. But an expert in these matters afterwards told me that they had to come up to the surface occasionally for air even though they could breathe to a certain extent under water. Like these fish, Christians also have to rise from time to time above their daily occupations in order that they may come into closer contact with God, though even while

occupied in their work they can keep to some extent in touch with Him."

" When I was coming over on the steamer a very learned man said to me, ' Are you not interested in the stars and planets and the men who are sending messages to Mars ? ' I said, ' It is interesting, but Mars is many millions of miles away from this earth. You are going to try and send messages there, but the Creator of that star and of yourself is nearer than breathing. Do you ever think of praying and sending messages to Him ? ' "

" But what about the business man," we asked, " who says he has no time for prayer since he has to hurry through his breakfast to rush off to his office." " Prayer is as important to him as his breakfast," said the Sadhu. " How can he get along without prayer any more than he can without food ? If he once begins to form the habit of prayer he will find so much pleasure in it that he will somehow or other find the time for it. . . . Prayer is as important as breathing. We never say, ' We have no time to breathe.' "

He himself finds time for prayer by cutting out many things which others think essential. Before a meeting he insists on several hours of quiet. If he has to speak in the evening he declines invitations to tea or dinner, though when he has no engagements of pressing importance

before him he readily accepts such invitations. When asked as to what a man should do when he has such a short time at his disposal that he must choose between his newspaper and his Bible, he said, "It is his duty to choose the Bible." He himself rarely reads the papers. He says, in the first place, he has no time, and, in the second place, he is not concerned with politics. "I am not greatly interested in Home Rule for India," he once confessed, "my Eternal Home is elsewhere."

Commenting upon the text, "What, could ye not watch with me one hour? Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation." "Why," he said, "does our Lord address these words of counsel to Peter? There must have been a special reason for this. Peter was the one who was going to deny Christ. Christ asked him to pray so that he might not enter into that great temptation. But he wasted that hour—and he denied Christ. There is a tradition about Peter that he often thought of this hour and grieved over it, calling it his 'thorn in the flesh.' Christ spent that hour in prayer. His prayer was heard and an angel from heaven strengthened Him. He obtained the strength needed to die on the Cross. If Peter had spent that hour in prayer he might have obtained the strength to overcome *his* temptation."

"Once on a mountain peak I heard below me the roar of thunder and saw flashes of lightning. At first I was rather afraid; but there was no danger to me from them, because I was seated above them and they were under my feet. In the same way Satan cannot harm the Christian who, by prayer, lives in the heavenly places with Christ."

Devotional Habits

The circumstances of the life of a wandering evangelist do not admit of absolutely regular habits. At times the Sadhu will have almost whole days of solitary communion with his Lord and Master. On occasion he has spent the whole night praying. At other times he has to be content with two hours of devotion in the early morning, in England often from five to seven. When he can find time he extends these two hours to three or four hours. Whenever he is compelled by circumstances to omit or unduly curtail his morning meditation he feels a certain restlessness and unhappiness throughout the day.

He starts the day by reading a chapter of the Bible, at first rapidly, but making a mental note of those verses which seem particularly rich and suggestive. Then he returns to these verses and lingers over them as long as he feels that he is having fruitful thoughts on them.

Then he spends about fifteen or more minutes in collecting his thoughts in preparation for prayer. Then, as he puts it, the Holy Spirit Himself teaches him what to pray for, both in regard to himself and in regard to others. For prayer he has no one posture. He prays sitting, kneeling, sometimes walking. As a Sikh he used to prostrate himself in prayer, but now he does not follow this practice.

"In praying do you generally use words?" we asked.

"No, the language of prayer is a language without words. When God speaks to the soul we have an immediate apprehension of His meaning, somewhat like what occasionally happens in conversation when you know what the other man is going to say before he says it. So when we have a quiet time God speaks to the soul. His thoughts are put directly into our minds without words, and very often they are thoughts which are not expressible in words; yet in one minute we may learn in this way what we could not learn otherwise in thirty years. Hence in private prayer I do not use words, but in large gatherings it is necessary to do so."

He lays great stress on the necessity for stillness and waiting on God. "God is quiet, He does not make a noise; therefore to understand Him we must be quiet." "In the hurry and

rush of life God is silent; we have to sit at Christ's feet if we would feel His blessing, and then Heaven will be in our heart." "Before Pentecost the Apostles had to *wait* ten days." "To receive great blessing from the Holy Spirit there must be great preparation."

"Philosophers have found that they can think better when they are quiet. How much more then must this be true of the deeper spiritual things! But those who have had no experience think the desire for quiet is merely laziness."

He prefers to pray alone, when his thoughts can flow steadily on with little or no distraction. He finds it hard to attain the same measure of concentration when in the company of others; though, frequently, for their sake, he has to pray with them. Little movements and shufflings seem to disturb him. Somewhat to our surprise he said that the Quaker method of silent corporate prayer did not particularly help him.

"When praying do you picture to yourself the figure of Christ?" we asked. "I always did so at first," he said, "I don't do it so frequently now. His figure comes up now and then. It is like the image of Christ which I always see in my Ecstasy. Often, and increasingly with the lapse of time, I feel the presence of Christ without seeing Him, either with my physical eyes, as in the case of the vision before

my conversion, or with my spiritual eyes, as in the case of my ecstatic experiences. As you become like Christ you feel His presence more. When we are in a hot country and a cold wind blows, it refreshes us very much. So is the presence of Christ to me in the midst of work."

Having in mind the practice of the mediæval mystics, we asked the Sadhu whether he had found the use of the Crucifix of value. "Personally," he replied, "I do not get much help from the Crucifix, but I think it may be useful to children, to beginners and to people engaged all the time in worldly business."

He does not derive much help from the use of written prayers. "Prayers by St. Chrysostom and others are beautiful, but they become mechanical in the course of time." He hesitates to use even the Lord's Prayer too often lest it become mechanical. Speaking of written prayers he says, "The needs of men are in their hearts, not in books." He sometimes tells this story: "A man was dying. A clergyman called on him, but found that his prayer-book was not in his pocket. So he hurried home to get it. When the clergyman came back the man was dead. The people said, 'Prayers don't seem to come out of his heart; they seem to come out of his pocket.'"

It is important to indicate his attitude towards the Holy Communion. He finds himself at home among Christians of all denominations. Now he stays with High Anglicans who attend daily Mass, now with Nonconformists who celebrate the Lord's Supper only occasionally. The nature of his work throws him in contact with Christians of all types of belief and practice, and the frequency with which he partakes of the Lord's Supper seems to be dependent somewhat on the people in whose midst he is living, and also on the time at his disposal. "If I had the time I would like to partake of it every day. I get great benefit from it." Nevertheless, the sense of the presence and companionship of the Living Christ is his, quite independently of participation in the Eucharist. His doctrine is simple. "I do not believe that the bread and wine are actually transformed into the body and blood of Christ, but their effect on the believer is as if they were. There was nothing in the brazen serpent that Moses lifted up in the wilderness, but it was the obedience of the people that healed them. So is it with the Sacrament. By themselves, the bread and wine are nothing, but the obedience to the commandment and the believer's attitude towards them make all the difference."

THE BEGINNER'S WAY

Thinking that not a few of those who have met the Sadhu or heard him preach would value some practical advice from such a man on the cultivation of the devotional life, we put to him the question, "What advice about prayer and meditation would you give to a beginner?"

"I should tell him to read a chapter, say of St. John, and to note the striking texts; then to try and find the inner meaning of these texts. This will teach him how to concentrate.

"In the earlier stages of my Christian experience I used generally to select one or more texts from the New Testament about the love of God, and fix attention on them. Such concentration produces the same result as the focussing of a magnifying glass on a piece of cloth. When we concentrate on spiritual things by fixing our thoughts and hearts towards the Sun of Righteousness, light and heat from that Sun will fall on all the rubbish of life and burn it. Everything against the will of God will thus be destroyed.

"At different times I have asked converts to Christianity what it was that led them to Christ. Some have quoted, 'Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest'; others, verses from St. Paul. Different texts appeal to different people. So it is better

to read a whole chapter and to pick out the text that appeals to one.

" But the same method will not suit all men. I knew two men who were suffering from the same disease. One was from North India and the other from South India. I thought the doctor would give them both the same medicine, but he did not do so. One came from a cold place and the other from a hot place. So he prescribed a different medicine for each, and they were both cured.

" Have you ever seen the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius, and do you advise anything like his method ? " " I have read the book, and I think that his method may be a help to others, but it did not help me much. It helped me a little, but not as much as my own method of meditation.

" Often we do not spend enough time in prayer ; that is why we lose strength and power. Sometimes it may be necessary to spend more than an hour ; early morning is the best time. First we feel His blessing. Afterwards we find that He is not only blessing us, but teaching us how to pray."

" Scientists often spend years, sometimes a whole lifetime, in making an important scientific discovery. Then how can we expect to discover spiritual beauties by spending only five minutes

every day in quiet and prayer? Some people become tired at the end of ten minutes or half an hour of prayer. What would they do when they have to spend Eternity in the presence of God? We must begin the habit here and become used to being with God.

"If we are going to work for Him He must be with us, and only through prayer can that be.

"There are several strings to a violin. They must be tightened if they are to produce a melody. Different thoughts are like the different strings. They must be tightened, that is, brought into subjection to Christ, and then the bow of prayer will produce wonderful songs.

"If we have not obtained this new life and light already, let us try to do so forthwith. If we have them, let us use them for His glory now; for if we do not use His gifts we may lose them for ever. A biologist told me that the ostrich was once able to fly, but now it has lost its power of flight because it never made use of its wings."

But without self-sacrificing service prayer is, in the Sadhu's view, of small account. Self-sacrificing service, then, is the first and last word of his exhortation. "There were twelve apostles and only five loaves; but when they were willing to give they found there was more than enough for all. It is when we are apparently

dissipating our strength that people begin to think, ‘They are not selfish—they have been saved.’ Our Saviour says that we are the salt of the earth. Only when it dissolves does salt give its savour to other things. Suppose we throw some salt into a pot of boiling rice, what is the use of the salt if it does not dissolve? If it dissolves its savour spreads through the thousands of grains of rice in the pot. Though hidden from sight, we know its presence by the taste. Because it dissolves, thousands of grains of rice become savoury. We likewise can save others only by losing ourselves. Otherwise we shall become like Lot's wife, who became a pillar of salt through her love of the world. What is the use of salt that does not dissolve?"

V

ECSTASY AND VISION

Esoteric Character

To the Sadhu, as has been already indicated, the great source of illumination, solace and physical refreshment is the recurrent state of Ecstasy in which he feels himself caught up to what he believes to be the place alluded to by St. Paul as " the third heaven " (2 Cor. xii. 2).

" I never try to go into Ecstasy ; nor do I advise other people to try. It is a gift to be accepted, but it should not be sought ; if given, it is a pearl of great price. During the fourteen years of my life as a sadhu there have been many times when, suffering from hunger, thirst or persecution, I might have been tempted to give it up but for the gift of these times of Ecstasy, but these I would not give up for the whole world."

Clearly, a study of the Sadhu's religion would be gravely misleading which did not include

an account of experiences to which he himself attaches such importance. Equally clearly the attempt to give one raises grave difficulties. Educated people, unless indeed they have studied the lives of the Mystics, are apt to question the mental balance of any one who not only sees Visions, but takes them seriously. The uneducated, on the other hand, especially in the East, may be inclined to regard both the seer and his revelations with that kind of superstitious veneration which the Sadhu himself is studiously anxious to preclude.

The Sadhu is quite alive to the danger. In public addresses he never alludes to his Visions; he only mentions them, and that but rarely, when speaking to friends whose discernment and discretion he trusts. Giving an explanation of a certain religious difficulty[1] he remarked, "This is a thing I often say in preaching, but I never say that I heard it in an Ecstasy, because people would not understand what I meant without long and elaborate explanation." Similarly, after attempting to give us an account of the things he had seen, he explained St. Paul's reticence about what he saw in the Third Heaven. "St. Paul was afraid people would misunderstand his meaning; and that is why he spoke of the experience as if it had been not his own but

[1] Cf. p. 205.

somebody else's, saying, 'I know a man in Christ who.' This was because he knew that, if he spoke of the Visions as his own, people would have come and bothered him by asking foolish questions, and would have misunderstood the answers he had given them." . . . "He was very wise not to try and tell them," added the Sadhu, with a smile that possibly expressed a half misgiving that he had been wiser had he imitated the Apostle's silence.

One friend has advised us to suppress this chapter altogether, but the Sadhu undoubtedly intended us to publish what he told us ; and for better or worse the rumour is abroad already, and has appeared in print, that he does see Visions. Some of these, too, evince a delicacy of feeling and a depth of moral insight which makes it a greater responsibility to suppress, than to publish, them. In the long-run, we feel sure, it will be doing a service to his reputation to make public an account of at least the most typical and most original of his Visions, which is really authentic. This, fortunately, we are in a position to do, since, for most of the material, the notes taken by one author could be checked by those of the other, and a considerable number of them were read and passed as correct by the Sadhu himself.

Visions of the Jewish Seers

The Sadhu's Visions are of special interest on account of the light which they throw on the origin and development of the conceptions of Resurrection, Judgement, Heaven and Hell. The traditional ideas on these and other eschatological questions were, in the main,—so recent research has shown—developed gradually in a long series of Apocalyptic writings, of which the earliest considerable instance is the book of Daniel (166 B.C.), and the latest which matters for our purpose is the Revelation of Peter written about A.D. 120 and rediscovered some years ago in an Egyptian tomb.[1]

Nearly every writer in the series makes some modification or adds some detail to the tradition. This revision of the tradition always occurs in the form of Visions seen by the reputed author of the book or of information communicated to him by angelic informants in a heavenly sphere. As we have them, the Visions have clearly undergone a considerable amount of editing by the actual author, and frequently also by later hands; but that the Visions were originally seen as Visions, and were for that reason regarded by the authors, as well as by

[1] The best popular account of Apocalyptic literature is R. H. Charles's *Between the Old and New Testaments* (Home University Library).

the readers, as Divine Revelations, is, in our opinion, beyond reasonable doubt.

Often these Visions take the form of an amplification or a new elucidation of some outstanding text or leading idea in an Old Testament Prophet or of some Vision of an earlier Apocalyptist. They contain much that is trivial and much that is fantastic, but, for all that, it was through this channel that the great ideas of Judgement and Eternal Life first became established in that later phase of Jewish religion out of which Christianity arose. The point, however, which it most concerns us now to notice is that this revelation—or, if one prefers to call it so, this discovery—was attained to by men of intense religious devotion who were passionately seeking for some reconciliation of the facts of life with the goodness of God. They found it in conceptions of the nature of life beyond the grave which, with each generation of Apocalyptists, became progressively more satisfactory, both morally and religiously, than the traditional views of their time.

Now, as has been already pointed out, the Sadhu, like the Apocalyptists, largely thinks in pictures; and, in general, his world-view, on its intellectual side, is in many ways far nearer to that of the early Jewish writers than it is to ours. He too is faced with the problem of

reconciling the goodness of God—a problem made more difficult to him than it was to them, precisely because he sees God always in terms of Christ—with traditional conceptions of the after-life. And to him, as to them, difficulties are solved by modifications of traditional conceptions which come to him in the form of Visions.

"St. John," says the Sadhu, "did not use the word 'ecstasy'; he said 'in the spirit,' but he meant the same thing." No one would repudiate more vehemently than the Sadhu himself any suggestion that his utterances should be put on a level with those of Scripture; but his claim to have enjoyed a spiritual experience which, if not identical with, is at least closely analogous to that of the author of the Apocalypse is, we feel sure, one which deserves very serious consideration. But, if so, it follows that a study of the Sadhu's experience will throw light on the psychological mechanism through and by means of which religious truth was mediated to certain of the Biblical writers.

If we bear in mind that Truth is quite a different thing from the particular psychological mechanism by which it is apprehended, and also that any revelation of the Divine must be conditioned by the mental outlook, culture and general experience of the recipient, we shall not be inclined to

deny that Visions may be a genuine revelation of truth. All nowadays would admit that any conception we may form of the nature of the future life must necessarily be of a symbolic character. The traditional[1] doctrines of Heaven, Hell and Judgement are admitted to be symbolic. The Visions of the Sadhu, in so far as they touch on these matters, are no less symbolic; but, if we mistake not, their symbolism is more deeply Christian, and, if so, they are, by comparison with the traditional views, an advance in the apprehension of Divine truth.

We are far from maintaining that Visions are the only, or even the best, means of attaining to a knowledge of religious Truth. Quite the contrary. The majority of the Hebrew Prophets, the Psalmists, St. Paul, not to mention Christ Himself, seem to have derived very little of their teaching from this source. And in regard to the eschatological subjects dealt with in the Sadhu's Visions, the more valuable of his conclusions have been anticipated by liberal theologians solely by the use of rational reflexion on the philosophical, moral and critical issues involved. We read him a passage from a recent volume on Immortality which closely resembled

[1] By "traditional" I mean the doctrines taught by practically all Christian theologians up to fifty years ago. Modern research shows that these largely misrepresent the New Testament conceptions. Cf. the essay "The Bible and Hell" in *Immortality*, ed. B. H. Streeter. (Macmillan.)

something in one of his Visions, remarking that it was curious that the writer should by these methods have reached a conclusion so very like that which had been given him in a Vision. He replied, "I am not at all surprised. Truth is one; but different men may attain it by different paths." Just so, all we are concerned to suggest is that, to the Sadhu as to the Apocalyptists, truths have come by way of Visions, which to men of their temperament and with their intellectual presuppositions probably could not have come, or at least not with equal force of conviction, in any other way.

Heaven

There are three Heavens, so it was revealed to the Sadhu once in Ecstasy.

The First Heaven is Heaven on earth—that wonderful inward peace and enjoyment of the presence of Christ which came as a result of his conversion, and which has been described in a previous chapter of this book.

The Second Heaven is an intermediate state; it is the Paradise of which Christ spoke on the Cross to the repentant thief. Here dwell for a time souls who are not yet sufficiently advanced in the spiritual life to enter the Third Heaven when they die. Here, as He said to the thief,

they are with Christ ; but they do not actually see Christ, though they feel His influence, as if waves of light were proceeding from Him, and hear, as it were, a heavenly music.

The Third Heaven is Heaven proper, as it might be styled. To this all righteous people will ultimately attain ; but it is granted to a certain few, of whom the Sadhu is privileged to be one, to make short visits there during their earthly life. " I understood," said the Sadhu, " what St. Paul meant when he said, ' Whether in the body or out of the body I know not,' because when I found myself there I seemed to have a body with form and shape, but all made, as it were, of light. But when I touched it (here he clasped his left arm with his hand) I felt nothing. This is what St. Paul speaks of as a spiritual body." " In Heaven I see not with bodily but with spiritual eyes, and I was told that these spiritual eyes are the same as those which all men will use after permanently leaving the body."

To all the Visions there is a constant background. It reflects, indeed it is the convincing proof—if further proof were needed—of the wholly Christocentric character of the Sadhu's Mysticism.

" Christ on His throne is always in the centre, a figure ineffable and indescribable. The face as

I see it in Ecstasy, with my spiritual eyes, is very much the same as I saw it at my conversion with my bodily eyes. He has scars with blood flowing from them. The scars are not ugly, but glowing and beautiful. He has a beard on His face. The long hair of His head is like gold, like glowing light. His face is like the sun, but its light does not dazzle me. It is a sweet face, always smiling —a loving glorious smile. Christ is not terrifying at all."

"And all around the throne of Christ, extending to infinite distances, are multitudes of glorious spiritual Beings. Some of them are saints, some of them angels. These are indistinguishable. 'The difference,' they told me, 'is not important: we are all one here.' They all look like younger brothers of Christ. They are all glorified, but His glory is far more glorious than their glory, and they differ among themselves in degree of glory, something like a difference of colour, but not quite that. Their clothes are, as it were, made of light, not dazzling but many-coloured. There are more colours there than in this world. There is nothing here so beautiful, not even diamonds and precious stones. When they speak to me they put their thoughts into my heart in a single moment; just as on earth one sometimes knows what a person is going to say before he says it. I did not have to learn the language of the

spiritual world. When we leave the body and enter that world, we speak it as easily and naturally as a new-born baby breathes the moment it enters this world, though it has not done such a thing before."

"In these visions we have most wonderful talks. This is the real Communion of Saints which is spoken of in the Apostles' Creed. We talk about spiritual things, and problems which no one here can solve. This good company solves them easily. There are very many things which I see and hear there and of which I have a clear picture in my mind, but I can't express them even in Hindustani, much less in English, and some of them are things that it would be no use even trying to express, because their beauty would be lost if they could be taken out of that world and put into this. But I always carry with me fresh and vivid memories of these things also. Another feature of that world is, that one never gets tired of it, one never wants something different. In this world one gets tired after three or four hours even at times of the highest experience of peace, but one never tires in the heavenly world. At a certain Convention I attended there was a simple village Christian who was praying. He was filled with the spirit: full of peace and happiness; and, trembling with excess of joy, he prayed, 'Lord, I thank Thee, I thank Thee, but no more

or I die. Enough! Enough!' I was very much surprised at his desiring to bring this state to an end. Then I thought of the story of Moses and how God told him, 'No man can see my face and live,' and he was shown only the back part of the Lord. The spirit can stand these exalted experiences, but this body cannot."[1]

"There is music, but no musical instrument. I looked about for an instrument, but there was none to be seen. The thing, however, which is most striking about this heavenly world is that I always feel at home. There is nothing I could wish otherwise, nothing awkward. I was told that if any two persons in that world, however far apart, wished to come together, they could do so in a moment of thought. I always find myself sitting among the others, perfectly familiarly and naturally."

"Any one who has been there for one second says to himself, 'This is the place on which I have set my heart, here I am completely satisfied. No sorrow, no pain, only love, waves of love, perfect happiness.' (As he recalled the vision, the Sadhu's face was radiant.) And it is for ever, not merely for a thousand years. No one there claims any part of it for his own. All

[1] We are inclined to think that this last illustration of the Sadhu's is somewhat misleading. The sense of exaltation characteristic of a revival meeting seems to us to be really a different type of spiritual experience from that which he describes as his own.

say '*our* home.' No words can express it. I think that is why St. Paul said that he heard things unutterable. In that world there are many things which correspond to things of beauty in this world, mountains, trees and flowers, but with all imperfection taken away. The mountains, trees and flowers of this earth are only the shadow of what I see there. Everything there, even inanimate objects, are so made that they continually give praise, and all quite spontaneously. I can see millions of miles, I see mansions and walls, but these nowhere impede the view, and if one is in the midst of a crowd it is the same. All are in a kind of a way transparent. One can see right through people ; so no one hides their love or what is in their heart.

"There we realise not only the desires we have known in this life, but desires, which we did not even know that we had, are opened up and realised, because there is everything to satisfy them. There I am satisfied, there there is nothing more to ask. It is wonderful ! That is our home.

"I asked one of the spirits the meaning of the passage in St. John : 'I said, Ye are gods.' I was told that man has innumerable desires, and that these show that he is going to make infinite progress when in Heaven. There we have more capacities than we have hairs of our head here.

"Another time I asked what Christ meant by saying, 'Be ye perfect, even as your Father in Heaven is perfect.' He did not say, 'Be perfect as the angels or the prophets.' I had been puzzled by this. Does it mean that we shall become God; and, if so, shall we rebel against Him? They told me there that God wants us to be equal to Him, because Love always wants an object for affection equal to itself. Just as men are not satisfied with loving animals merely, so God wants us to be equal to Him. But if we became so, we could not rebel: for we should then have an infinite knowledge of the Love of God, and that would bring with it infinite thankfulness. There is no jealousy in Heaven. Our Heavenly Father wants us to be made equal to Him. There is no jealousy in Heaven. There are differences of degree, but there are no disagreements. Every one is always on every one else's side, and those who are low down in the scale feel so proud that their elder brothers are so big."

"In Ecstasy," we asked, "have you ever seen visions like those in the Revelation of St. John?"

"Yes, I have seen many things like the visions at the end of Revelation; and I thought when I saw them, 'Our elder brother two thousand years ago has been visiting these same places.'"

" Did you ever see visions like those in the middle part of Revelation ? "

" No, never. Only like the end, in particular the passage describing the pure river of water of Life clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. When I saw these things I felt that I wanted to fall down and worship those who showed them to me, but they said to me, ' No, worship Him,' pointing to Christ.

" I said, ' Where is the capital of Heaven ? . . . Where He is sitting ? ' They told me, ' No, in every heart that loves Him, because there He reigns, not by sword or by force, but by Love in the heart. If there were no living souls there would be no reign. The royal seal is the image of Christ in the heart ; and where this is in the heart it extends at the same time over the whole body. St. John says that the Name of the Lamb is written on the foreheads of the Saints. I looked, but I did not see anything written there, but I saw that their whole face looked like that of Christ, so I understood that that was what St. John meant."

" Did you ever see Cherubim or other winged creatures such as are described in Ezekiel and in Revelation ? "

" No. I think that when these spoke of winged creatures it was due to the difficulty of finding human language to explain what they

saw. I saw waves of light shining out from the spirits in Heaven, and at first these looked rather like wings, but they were not really wings.

"The faces of all the spirits whom I see in Heaven look like Christ, but in a lesser degree; just as the image of the Sun is reflected alike in a number of water-pots. Christ is the Image of God—that image in which God created man—this is the true image, but it is only imperfectly stamped on other men. This explains that feeling of recognition of Christ as one known long ago,[1] which is experienced by all on their first entry to the heavenly state. It shows an original connexion between man and Christ, even though one does not know it before. All sinners have within themselves a battered image of their Divine Creator, and so when converted they recognise and fall down and worship Him. I have had no chance of meeting others who have had Ecstasy like mine, otherwise I should have liked to ask them about this experience of recognition.

"I once asked how far this heavenly world is from the earth. They told me they did not know, but that it only took one moment to get there. I was surprised that they did not know.

[1] Cf. p. 54. "I felt when first I saw Him as if there were some old and forgotten connexion between us, as though He had said, but not in words, 'I am He, through whom you were created.' I felt something the same, only far more intensely, as I felt when I saw my father after an interval of many years. My old love came back to me, I knew I had been his before."

"Before I became a Christian, whenever I saw any one die, I used to long for a place where there would be no more death. I was repelled by the continual round of death and rebirth implied in the Hindu doctrine of transmigration. The first time I entered Heaven in Ecstasy I was quite certain that I had come into a place where there was no more death."

The Resurrection of the Body

"Did you learn anything about the resurrection of the body?"

"I was told there that Christians leave behind them the physical body. That body is buried, but the spiritual body that is within is then free to come out, and in this we go to the Second or the Third Heaven according to our state of development. At least this is true of the majority of Christians; but there are grades in the spiritual life, and in the case of some few who have lived very close to Christ this physical body is slowly changed and is taken up into Heaven. It is completely spiritualised, for flesh and blood cannot inherit eternal life, but it is the same physical body only completely transformed. I asked them whether this applied to Enoch and Elijah, who were taken up bodily into Heaven. They told me 'Yes,' and that it also applied to

Moses, and then they pointed out to me Moses and Elijah in Heaven, and they told me that they appeared at the Transfiguration in the same form and aspect in which I saw them then, for in Heaven we no longer change. God buried Moses, but they told me God's way of burying is not like ours. It is to enfold with a spiritual body. No one can enter into Heaven with a physical body, but in the case of those few that body is transformed ; and this is what happened to the Body of Christ.

" But the majority of ordinary Christians leave the physical body behind and proceed in their spiritual body to the intermediate state or Second Heaven. Here they stay, some a few days, some a few months, some longer, until they are ready for the Third Heaven. Exceptional people, however, like St. Francis of Assisi and the author of *The Imitation of Christ*, are already so spiritually advanced that they enter the Third Heaven at once.

The Last Judgement

" I enquired once, ' Will the dead stand in a line all together and be judged ? ' I was told, No ; after leaving the body the soul knows everything that has happened to it. The memory of it all is clear and fresh, and thereby they are judged. The heavenly light shows the wicked

to themselves ; they see at once that they cannot live in that fellowship of saints and angels. They feel so out of place there, they find everything so uncongenial, that they ask to be allowed to go away from Heaven. Men are not turned out of Heaven by God. Heaven is not a place with walls and gates where you have to ask for a ticket of admission. The ticket of admission is the life a man has led.

" Those who are born again can see the Kingdom of Heaven [1] and feel at home there, those who are not cannot do so. This is the real judgement, and it is a judgement that is going on every day. It is not effected by an act of God interposing between ourselves and Him, it is internal. The Last Judgement will be a proclamation of the final result, when every true servant of God will be exalted before the whole creation.

" I was also told that in this world our spiritual bodies are inside our material bodies, and that when we sin it is like when we press with a point on paper behind which is a sheet of carbon ; on the outside of the paper there is a very slight mark, but inside there is a clear black mark. Thus our sins mark and scar our spiritual bodies, and the result of this will be seen when, after death, the spiritual body escapes from the

[1] The Sadhu appears to interpret the phrase Kingdom of Heaven as equivalent to the Third Heaven.

material ; and the revelation of the injury it has sustained will in itself be a large part of the judgement."

Hell

" I was also told that the love of God operates even in Hell. God does not shine in His full light, because those there could not bear it, but He gradually shows them more and more light, and by and by brings them on and moves their conscience towards something better, although they think that the desire is entirely their own. Thus God works on their minds from within, something in the same way, though in the opposite direction, as that in which Satan suggests temptation to us here. Thus, what with God's work within and the Light without, almost all those in Hell will ultimately be brought to Christ's feet. It will perhaps take millions of ages, but when it is attained they will be full of joy and thankfulness towards God ; though they will still be less happy than those who have accepted Christ on earth. Thus Hell also is a training school, a place of preparation for Home. Those in Hell know that it is not their home because they suffer there. Men were not created for Hell and therefore do not enjoy it, and, when there, desire to escape to Heaven. They do so, but they find Heaven even more uncongenial than

Hell, so they return. But this convinces them that there is something wrong in their lives, and thus they are gradually led to repentance. At least, that is the case with the majority, but there are some few personalities, Satan for instance, in regard to whom I was told, 'Don't ask about them.' And so I didn't like to ask, but I hoped that for them also there was some hope.

"They also told me that the Saints help in the work of saving souls in Hell, because there can be no idleness in Heaven. Those in Hell will ultimately be brought to Heaven like the prodigal son, but with regard to the ultimate fate of a certain number you must not ask." The Sadhu is inclined to think that perhaps these few will be annihilated.

"Once I said, 'So many people will be lost because they have not heard of Christ.' They said, 'The contrary will be the case; very few will be lost.' There is a kind of heavenly joke —no, joke is not a good word for it. 'Very few will be lost but many will be saved. It is so, but don't tell,' they said, as it were, in jest, 'because it will make men careless, and we want them to enjoy the First Heaven—that is, the Heaven on earth—as well.'"

"If there were no hope for all the non-Christians in the world and all the Christians who die in sin, God would stop creating men. We

must do our part here on earth to save sinners, but if they refuse we need not be without hope for them."

The Sadhu's "universalism" recalls the famous "Shewing" to Mother Juliana of Norwich, "All manner of things shall be well," and her comments thereon—except that her respect for the authority of the Church precludes her making any suggestion *how* this may be possible.[1] The Sadhu faithfully obeys the injunction, "Don't tell." In his popular teaching, as we shall see in the next chapter, he stresses the need of repentance, and the certainty of immediate judgement in the next life, but he never speaks of his hope of *ultimate* salvation even for the unrepentant.

Other Visions

The Sadhu's visions are not only, or even mainly, concerned with Eschatology. Not a few of the parables and arguments he uses in his preaching appear to have come to him this way. Sometimes also he finds in Ecstasy answers to questions of Scriptural exegesis which have puzzled him.

We quote an example which is characteristic of the man alike in its uncritical simplicity and its fine moral insight. "Why did not Abraham

[1] Cf. *Revelations of Divine Love*, ed. G. Warwick, p. 66 f. (Methuen.)

pray for Lot? God was about to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah. Abraham prayed for others. Why did he not pray for his nephew? Why did he not say, 'Save at least my nephew'? It was because something was wrong with Lot; for, though he had lived in the place for years, he could not make even ten men righteous. He had not done his duty. So Abraham was ashamed to pray for him; but God remembered Abraham, and for his sake Lot was saved. In the same way Christians may be good, and yet if they are not trying to save others Christ will be ashamed to intercede for them as Abraham was ashamed to intercede for Lot. But," he added rather curiously, "I don't often mention this, as there are so many people nowadays who do not believe that such men as Abraham and Lot ever existed."

"On another occasion I asked, 'Whence is Life?' I was told that the one source of Life is behind everything. Our clothes are warm, because the body which they conceal is warm. There is no heat in the clothes; that comes from the body within. Just so the life in all living creatures is derived from the one source of Life behind. Their life is from the Giver of life. Again, just as our body is hidden by our clothes, but the shape of the clothes as well as the heat comes from the body inside, so all the vegetables

and animals that we see are but the outward forms upheld by the Giver of life.

" I saw waves of light and love coming out from Christ, in whom dwelleth the fullness of the Godhead embodied. These give spiritual life. Also in a mysterious way these waves of life and love give life to living creatures of all grades. Matter and motion cannot produce life. The source of life is life.

" I was told that the waves of light which I saw were the Holy Spirit. Just as the moon seems to be straight overhead wherever we stand, so the glorious Christ with the waves coming out of Him was seen here, there and everywhere. I saw crowds of people with glorious bodies, all saying, ' He is near me,' ' He is near me.' "

The Nature of the Ecstatic State

The student of Mysticism will desire some further materials if he is to form a scientifically considered estimate of the nature and significance of the Sadhu's Visions. Accordingly we now proceed to set forth in detail the Sadhu's own account of the nature of the ecstatic state.

" A friend once asked, ' What is Ecstasy ? ' I said, ' There are pearls in the sea, but to get them you have to dive to the bottom. Ecstasy is a dive to the bottom of spiritual things. It is

not a trance; but it is like a dive, because, as a diver has to stop breathing, so in Ecstasy the outward senses must be stopped.'

"Whenever I am alone always something new comes to me, and that in a language without words; I feel surrounded, as it were, with a wonderful atmosphere, then something speaks in my heart, then I am in the state of Ecstasy. No words are spoken, but I see all pictured; in a moment problems are solved, easily and with pleasure, and with no burden to my brain."

In his earlier days as a Christian, Ecstasy was a comparatively rare occurrence. Now, although he does not know beforehand when he will enter into it, it is an almost everyday experience—or rather it might be so, did he not hold himself back. If he thought only of his own pleasure he would spend all his life thus with Christ, but he wants to help men. Ecstasy commonly ensues after about twenty minutes of prayer and meditation—sometimes while on his knees, but more often in a sitting posture.

This frequency of the Sadhu's Ecstasies is a notable fact. So far as our information goes, with the Biblical writers and with most of the great Saints, Visions and Revelations were of comparatively rare occurrence.

While in the state of ecstasy, which sometimes lasts for several hours, he loses all perception of

the external world;[1] and he has no sense of the lapse of time, "there is no past and no future; everything is present."

"Once a friend whom I had told not to disturb me if he found me in Ecstasy came in and found me with eyes wide open smiling and all but laughing; not knowing I was in Ecstasy he spoke to me, but as I did not hear him he desisted and told me about it afterwards. On another occasion I went into Ecstasy under a tree. When I came back to ordinary life I discovered that I had been stung all over with hornets, so that my body was all swollen, but I had felt nothing."

Once he was announced to speak at a meeting at eight o'clock in the morning. He began his prayer about five o'clock in the morning and involuntarily entered the ecstatic state. When he came out of Ecstasy he found it was nine o'clock. He had forgotten all about the meeting. The people, who had gathered in large numbers to hear his message, were wondering why he, who was generally so punctual, did not appear. After a while they dispersed with disappointment. He was very sorry that this should have happened, though he did not, or rather could not, explain to them the reason. "I do not

[1] This fact is vouched for by more than one friend of the Sadhu with whom we have discussed the matter.

generally speak of these experiences to others, because they would not understand me, but think I am foolish." While in cities he is very careful and checks himself from "slipping"—to use his own phrase—into Ecstasy. On the Himalayas, with more leisure at his command and with no definite appointments before him, there is no need for this restraint.

"Do you find," we asked, "that you more often go into an Ecstasy when you are feeling physically strained and tired or when you are physically fresh?"

"Both. Perhaps more often when physically fresh; but if it happens to me when I am physically strained and tired out, or, as I recollect on more than one occasion, when I was feeling despondent because people had refused to listen to my preaching, the result is that I feel completely refreshed and invigorated. This is another of the reasons which proves to me that it is not an ordinary trance. When I used to practise Yoga there was no permanent refreshment, though the trance might be temporarily comforting. Indeed the great contrast between the state of Ecstasy and the Yogic states which I cultivated before becoming a Christian lies in the fact that in Ecstasy there is always the same feeling of calm satisfaction and being at home, whatever had been my state of mind before going into

Ecstasy. Whereas in the Yogic state, if before the trance I was feeling sad, I used to weep in the trance, if cheerful I would smile. Also after an Ecstasy I always feel strengthened, invigorated and refreshed. This result did not follow Yoga.

"The object of the Yogic trance is not to satisfy the heart but the head.

"The state of Ecstasy is not, as I believe Yoga to be, the result of self-hypnotism. I never try to get into it. Nor do I think on the same subject for an hour together in order to induce the state, as those do who practise Yoga.

"Ecstasy is not a disease or a form of hallucination. It is a waking, not a dream state. I can think in it steadily. At normal times the flow of my thoughts is disturbed by distractions, but not in the ecstatic state. Generally a thought remains in my mind only for a minute, being quickly followed by other thoughts; whereas, in the state of Ecstasy, I am able to think for a long time on the same subject. I am inclined to believe that this is because in that state the mental activities are no longer impeded by the material brain.

"While in Ecstasy I think on such themes as the love of God, and at the same time listen to spirits, especially the Holy Spirit, as they talk to me.

"When I come back to my body I find a great difference between what I have seen in

Ecstasy and what I here see bodily with my eyes.

"Often when I come out of Ecstasy I think the whole world must be blind not to see what I see, everything is so near and so clear."

Occasionally he meets in Heaven people he has known on earth.

"Once in Ecstasy I saw a man with a glorious body. He was very happy. He asked me, 'Do you recognise me?' I said 'No.' 'Don't you remember seeing me?' I said 'No.' Then he said, 'I was in a Leper Asylum which you visited. On account of leprosy I had lost my fingers and my face was disfigured. Now I am no more a leper. I have received this glorious life through Jesus Christ. I left that body and entered into this life on February 22, 1908.' Afterwards I verified the facts and found them to be true. He had died on the day and at the place mentioned in the vision."

One is reminded by this last incident of the famous story of the Monk of Evesham, who went into a trance lasting three days, during which he reported that his spirit had visited Heaven, Hell and Purgatory. In Purgatory he saw the soul of a certain Abbess whose death had taken place during those three days, although news of it had not yet reached Evesham at the time he reported what he had seen. His contemporaries regarded this as

conclusive evidence that his spirit had actually been into Purgatory—where, of course, the lady's soul would then be. The facts, however, admit another interpretation. Certain individuals, when in a state of trance, are peculiarly susceptible to telepathic influences. If the monk was one of these, thought transference, either from the dying Abbess herself or from her entourage, would explain his knowledge of her death and, by implication, therefore, of her present whereabouts.

"You have explained," we said, "that hearing what is spoken in the spirit world is quite a different thing from earthly hearing. Is there the same kind of difference between heavenly and earthly seeing?"

This was obviously a question the answer to which was perfectly clear in the Sadhu's own mind, but it was one that he felt could not be expressed in human language or by analogies drawn from this world. The impression which he conveyed was that the analogy between spiritual and bodily seeing was rather closer than that between spiritual and bodily hearing which he had previously described. The visions and pictures seen in that world are like things seen in this, but with a difference. "When in this world we see mountains, trees and flowers we see and admire. In that world also we see and

admire objects of the same sort, only there a kind of force comes from them which gives one an impulse to praise the Creator of it all, and that without any kind of effort, but simply as a spontaneous expression of the fullness of joy. In this world when I see flowers and other beautiful things I admire, but they are passive. But in the spiritual world which I visit in Ecstasy it is the other way round. They are active, I am passive."

We tried to discover whether the Sadhu was conscious of any development in the type or quality of his Visions. But except for the fact that since the Fast they had become more frequent there seems to have been little change. Indeed he himself regards the richness of the revelations he received at a time when his own Christian experience was immature as a proof that the knowledge so obtained is derived from an external source and is not merely a dream product of his own mind.

An Unique Phenomenon

In the Sadhu's account of his Ecstasies there are two important points which it will suffice to recall without further comment—the frequency of their occurrence, and the fact that they are never followed by exhaustion but always by refreshment,

both physical and mental. There are four others which demand consideration.

First, there is one feature in which his experiences differ from those of the Apocalyptic writers and—to the best of our knowledge—of the Western Mystics in general. The Sadhu does not in Ecstasy either travel from place to place himself, visiting Hell in person, for instance, nor does he see a series of vividly dramatic pictures of which the interpretation is either obvious at once or is given by an angel interpreter. One might say, indeed, that he has only a single Vision—the Third Heaven—a Vision evidently including within itself an inexhaustible variety yet always essentially the same. The information and ideas which are communicated to him in Ecstasy are not presented as separate visions but rather as verbal communications from different spirits whom he meets on different occasions within the circuit, so to speak, of the one great constant Vision.

Secondly, the Sadhu is far more concerned than are the Apocalyptic writers to affirm and reaffirm the ineffable character of his experience—the words are words but they are neither heard nor spoken, the sights are seen and yet not as if with eyes. "There is no language which will express the things which I see and hear in the spiritual world; I am like a dumb man who can

taste and enjoy the sweets that are given him, but cannot express or explain it to others." He is not only aware, but is urgent to insist, that the sights and words he reports are but a shadowy reflexion of the reality—in other words, that they are essentially symbolic.

Thirdly, Ecstasy to him is not, he says, a dream state—by which he means a state in which haphazard disconnected scenes and events pass meaninglessly by—but a waking state, a state of concentrated capacity of thought, of clearer and more continuous thought than he is capable of in ordinary life. The fact that in Ecstasy he can be so unconscious of external things as not to feel, for instance, the sting of hornets, confirms this statement. From sleep one can be easily awakened; but his Ecstasy is evidently, in its psychological aspect, a state of what is called "temporary dissociation," and it is one characterised by intense concentration of thought and emotion.

We may compare Wordsworth's lines—well known, not equally, perhaps, well understood—in which he speaks of an apparently frequent and highly valued experience of his own in language every word of which might have been used by the Sadhu to describe his Ecstasy:

. . . another gift,
Of aspect more sublime; that blessed mood,
In which the burden of the mystery,

In which the heavy and the weary weight
Of all this unintelligible world,
Is lightened : that serene and blessed mood,
In which the affections gently lead us on,
Until, the breath of this corporeal frame
And even the motion of our human blood
Almost suspended, we are laid asleep
In body, and become a living soul :
While with an eye made quiet by the power
Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
We see into the life of things.[1]

Fourthly, this concentration of thought and emotion is consummated in Visions in which in the centre of the picture there is always Christ. Always as a dominant impression is the consciousness of being with Christ and of receiving from Him enhancement of insight, vitality and power. Not only are thought and feeling intense, but all along the whole being is focussed on the concept of the Living and Eternal Christ.

The literature of Mysticism, Eastern and Western, is so vast that even those who have spent a lifetime in its study can generalise on the subject only under correction ; and the authors of this volume have no claim to speak as experts. But it is perhaps not too rash to affirm that, although parallels to each of the six features we have noted above could probably

[1] *Lines on Tintern Abbey.*

be found in some previous Mystic, Eastern or Western, their conjunction in a single individual is unique. But, if so, what is the explanation? It is not enough to say that every Mystic is in a sense unique. Very tentatively we hazard a suggestion. India is the land of Mystics, but the Sadhu is the first Indian—or rather the first whose experiences we have on record—to become a Christocentric Mystic. We should expect that Christian Mysticism when naturalised in India would take a new and characteristically Indian form.

The Idea and its Symbol

A study of the recorded visions of Mystics and Apocalyptists leads one to emphasise the fundamental importance of the distinction between their *content*, that is, the idea or value apprehended, and the *form* or symbol in which they are expressed. We note also that the form and the content of a vision are respectively derived from, and conditioned by, entirely different elements in the mentality and experience of the individual who sees it. The form assumed by a vision would appear to depend partly on the dramatic quality of the mind of the subject, partly on the nature of the materials from which to build up its symbols that are provided by his previous experience and environment. In the

Sadhu's case these materials are largely derived from that study of the Bible on which his emotions as well as his intellect have been concentrated so long. But the content of a vision is determined by quite other factors. First, the intellectual, ethical and religious insight of the seer—behind which, in the Sadhu's case, lies a lifetime of thought, prayer and sacrificing service. Secondly, the degree to which there are concentrated all the highest faculties of the soul, thought, love, æsthetic perception, on the problem which the vision solves. Thirdly, the extent to which all this takes place at a time when the whole personality is lifted up and inspired by intense conscious communion with the Divine—to the Sadhu, then as always, visualised and realised under the image of the Eternal Christ.

The *form* of the Sadhu's visions is beautiful and appropriate. But the degree of spiritual truth which they convey, their validity as inspired intuitions concerning the nature of inexpressible realities, their value as revelation, if you like to put it so, depends entirely on the three factors which have determined their *content.* The Visions are of value, not because they are visions, but because they are the Sadhu's visions; and that, not merely because the Sadhu has an intuitive genius for things religious and is a man of prayer, but because in thought, word,

and deed he has lived a consistent life which has developed in him a personality completely unified; and, lastly, not even because of this alone, but because they are the visions of the Sadhu in deep conscious communion with his Lord.

Did space allow we should go on to argue that exactly the same psychological principles have determined the form, and exactly the same factors of personal character and concentrated devotion account for the value (a value which, we should hold, is not the same in all cases) of the visions recorded in the Bible. We should connect this with the conception of Inspiration as being essentially a hyper-stimulation of the natural faculties of insight and understanding, which, in men of high ideals schooled by the discipline of a noble life, must inevitably follow from personal communion with a personal Divine. And, lastly, we should urge that the supreme degree of Inspiration which characterises the great Hebrew writers is mainly conditioned by their standard of conduct—sane, stern, but, for that age, humane,—by their intense concentration of interest on moral and religious issues, and by their deep experience of communion with the Divine.[1]

[1] These conceptions are worked out in the essays by Mr. Emmet on "The Psychology of Power" and "The Psychology of Inspiration" in *The Spirit*, ed. B. H. Streeter. (Macmillan.)

DIVINE GUIDANCE

"The visions which you have described so far all give answers to theological questions. Were you ever," we asked, "given in a vision the solution to a practical problem which perplexed you—as, for instance, what is the next thing to be done?" In reply the Sadhu told the following story:

"Once when travelling in the Himalayas, I set out for the village of Rampur. I came to a place where two roads branched. I was not sure which was the road to Rampur. I took one of them, and after walking a long distance I realised that I had chosen the wrong one. If I wanted to return I should have to walk back eleven miles. Distressed at the mistake, I went into the neighbouring village of Nalthora. A local shopkeeper beckoned to me. When I went to him he hid the Hindi New Testament he had in his hand, thinking that I was a Hindu Sannyasi. After conversing a while he said to me, 'What do you think of Jesus Christ?' 'He is my Saviour,' I said. 'Do not be troubled,' he replied joyfully, 'at having lost your way and come here. For some time I have been studying these Gospels. I have many doubts and difficulties. I have been praying that the Lord would send me some one who would

clear them up. He has brought you here in answer to my prayer.' We continued late into the night talking about Christ, and I spent the next day also with him. His doubts were cleared away and he believed in Christ. Later on he was baptized. In this way God guides us when we entrust ourselves to Him. We may think that we have lost our way. But He will take us to places where we are needed and so save souls."[1]

This did not exactly meet our question, so we repeated it later on and got a more direct reply.

"I have sometimes asked what will happen if I do so and so. I was told not to worry about the future. The future is in my good Father's hands. I must not worry about it, but do my present work. I shall probably be given twenty-four hours' notice of my death; and the spirits that I see in Heaven will come to meet me and conduct me there. I should myself like thus to have time to tell my friends beforehand of my death; like St. Paul my desire is to go away and be with Christ, but I wish also to stay here for the sake of those I can help.

"It will be a great thing at the time of death to be met by the saints from Heaven. The same dear friends I have so often met in Ecstasy will come and fetch me and will lead me there.

[1] We afterwards found the story in the Tamil addresses, and have reproduced it from that version.

Just as kind friends in London lead me—or I should get lost."

Perhaps even this reply, being mainly relevant to the particular problem of preparation for death, did not quite give the information we were seeking. We feel certain, however, that, while the Sadhu relies enormously on guidance in answer to prayer, such guidance does *not* come to him, any more than to the generality of Western Mystics, by way of explicit directions in the state of Ecstasy. This has been more or less implied by many little things he has said in conversation ; and seems to be clearly expressed in the following answer to a question we put him on another occasion : "How do you find out the will of God ?" "Those who live with God have no difficulty in finding out God's will. Christians, who spend little time with God and are mainly concerned with the things of this world, may be perplexed. Men may find out God's will by their own convictions and feelings or by circumstances. Men who live with God have strong convictions that such and such is the will of God. They love and know the Father and therefore they know His will." "Have you ever done anything which you thought was the Father's will, but afterwards found out to be your own will ?" "No ; for instance, fourteen years ago I became a sadhu

under the conviction that it was my Father's will. I still believe it to be my Father's will."

The Authority of the Church

Mediæval Mystics often submitted their Visions to their confessor, and, on his report of their orthodoxy or value, decided whether they had come from God and should be published, or had come from Satan and should be suppressed. Accordingly we asked the Sadhu, "If ever anything which has been told you in Ecstasy seems to conflict with the traditional teaching of the Church, which authority do you prefer?"

"There are not in the Church enough men of the deepest spiritual experience to give final authority to what its teachers say. So I go direct to God. The Creeds were made by men who had spiritual experience, as is shown by their reference to the 'Communion of Saints'; but now the people who repeat them have not the same rich experience. With me a revelation in Ecstasy counts for more than Church tradition. 'Churchianity' and 'Christianity' are not the same thing. John Wesley and General Booth followed God's guidance in opposition to the Church, and they proved to be right. Every one, however, is not a mystic, so the authority of Church tradition is necessary for the majority.

Roman Catholics have gone too far in one direction, some Protestants in the other. But it is not enough to be a member of the Church, one must also be a member of Christ."

The Dangers of Ecstasy

"Since Ecstasy means so much to you," we asked, "do you recommend the ordinary Christian to try and attain to it?"

"No. Prayer is for every man and so is Meditation. If it is God's Will that he go further, God will lead him that way. If not, let him be content to stay at the stage of simple prayer.

"No longer now, but frequently some years ago, before getting into the state of Ecstasy, I used to hear voices and that with these ears (that is, not in the spiritual language of the heavenly world), and see lights or hear music, and I found out that this was due to Satan or some evil spirit. Sometimes it was as if there were sharp needles pricking me; and I saw light, but not a real light. I think there is something in the heart which enables one instinctively to judge whether such experiences are of God or not. I somehow felt that these were not from God. As soon as I heard the voice I recognised that it was not Christ's voice. The sheep hear His voice

and recognise it. Mary thought that the man she saw in the garden was the gardener, but as soon as He began to speak she knew that it was Christ. Sometimes I felt a sort of heat, but there was no joy in it, and I found these experiences were a hindrance to my getting into the true Ecstasy. I recognised that they were not real. The fort, that is the heart, was not reached by them. Satan sometimes merely whispers; sometimes his words are clear. Sometimes he says, 'You are wrong, this is not the way'; 'You have left Truth behind'; 'You are a sinner, you cannot be saved.' When I listened to the voices I felt troubled. When I prayed to the Lord to help me everything stopped, the heat, the whispering, the shiverings, and the prickings. Then I said, 'These things were from Satan; this other (that is, the true Ecstasy which followed) is from my Lord who stopped them.'

"Unless a man lives very close to Christ these preliminary states would be enough to deceive him. Even Christians and genuine seekers after truth, who have been the prophets of other religions, have been thus deceived. In this way false religions have arisen. Their founders thought that divine voices were speaking to them when it was really devils. But, if they had taken no notice of these preliminary voices and gone on beyond, they might have attained the true Ecstasy. Mystics

should be very careful about these things, especially beginners. Those who have been living in the world very naturally think that these experiences are great things because they have seen nothing like them before, but they come from Satan or from other beings of the lower spirit world."

The Sadhu here mentioned the names of certain theosophists and other well-known persons both dead and alive whom he believed to have been deluded by these false spirits, hinting, however, that it might be unwise for us to print them. "These spirits know something of the future but not a great deal. Just as in India we can prophesy what the weather will be like for some weeks ahead, so the lower spirits, through their superior knowledge of the tendency of things, can prophesy events a short time ahead, and this helps them in deceiving men. Prophets inspired by God can prophesy things many many years ahead. That is the difference.

"It is these spirits of the lower spirit world with which spiritualists get into contact. From them spiritualists get interesting things, but they are ultimately deceived by the spirits, who begin by giving them ninety-nine things that are true and one that is false, and gradually increase the proportion of false and decrease the true until they lead people on to atheism or some other false position. The truly spiritual man has that within

him which feels an instinctive antipathy to the kind of things which are told him by spirits of the lower world. If we seek only what is interesting, we shall never reach as far as the real higher spirit world."

The Catholic Mystics repeatedly assert that if you seek for visions you will get them—but they will be sent you by the Devil, not by God. The Sadhu's opinion, we have seen, is much the same. But there are degrees of seeking. It is the lesson of modern psychology that in this matter it is better not even to desire.

It is very easy—as the history of Theosophy and Spiritualism, ancient and modern, shows—for people of a certain temperament consciously or accidentally to acquire the art of slipping into a trance-state and then seeing Visions full of curious information on the nature of the Universe, spheres of existence, the life to come. But the form of such Visions, at any rate in the main, comes from the thoughts and experiences, the tastes and the studies of a man's waking life; the content, that is, its intellectual and spiritual quality, will depend on the quality of his own mind. A mind untrained in accurate thought, undisciplined by the moral effort to realise in practical life a stern and noble ideal, will be reflected in visions commonplace, melodramatic or bizarre, their form suggested by its favourite literature or meditation. If the

visionary takes these seriously as evidence of a special personal gift of supernatural knowledge, and further if he, or she, has a little circle of admirers whose subtle flattery will encourage still more and more elaborate flights of fancy, then before he knows it he will be well on the way of a rake's progress of intoxicated vanity—soon to be the founder or the hierophant of some esoteric cult.

There is another reason for mistrusting dreams and visions. Modern medical Psychology has proved that the dream life is the expression of thoughts and emotions which have penetrated into the subconscious regions of the mind. Some dreams may be the expression of thoughts and emotions connected with the higher interests of the conscious self, which have penetrated deep into the subconscious.[1] But dreams often tell a different tale. In our waking hours the tiger and the ape are more or less held in check by conscience, training, social convention. But dreams are the holiday-time for the egoist, the sensualist or the craven that lives in most of us. The mechanism of dream symbolism enables these hidden passions, while finding expression for themselves, to disguise their true nature from

[1] The strong disciples of Freud deny that any dream can be concerned with the higher interests of the waking self; but, fortified by what seems to me convincing evidence and not without some support from expert medical opinion, I am bold to make the assertion.—B. H. S.

conscious recognition. And this disguise is habitually effected with an ingenuity and a cunning which no one who has not studied long and carefully the recent researches of Psychology would regard as credible. So long as we regard dreams as merely dreams this does not matter. Indeed it is probable that dreams are often a kind of safety valve of the greatest value, enabling the personality to rid itself in harmless fantasies of passion which, without such outlet, would too insistently demand expression in word or act in waking life. But if we regard them as channels of revelation the case is altered.

A man like the Sadhu has led a life of thought and prayer and of willing suffering for Christ's sake, which has remoulded him to the very depths of heart and soul ; in him subconscious and conscious alike have become completely consecrated to the Master ; in him the tiger and the ape are all but subjugated ; yet more important, even in ecstatic trance mind and soul are still directed wholly upon Christ, so that with him the mechanism of thought and of expression is Christ-controlled in Ecstasy as it is in normal life.

To him Ecstasy may not only be without danger but may bring actual profit. It is not so with the rest of us. The light that we must walk by is the light of conscious thought, with prayer and meditation. The specious Visions and Revela-

tions which come by the easy path of a facile trance-practice, whether in ourselves or others, we are mistaken to admire, we are demented if we seek.

The story is told that Said, the servant of Muhammad, once came to his master with an enthusiastic account of an Ecstasy he had enjoyed :

"In that hour
All past eternity and all to come
Was gathered up in one stupendous Now,—
Let understanding marvel as it may,
Where men see clouds, on the ninth heaven I gaze,
And see the throne of God. All heaven and hell
Are bare to me and all men's destinies.
The heavens and earth, they vanish at my glance,
The dead rise at my look. I tear the veil
From all the worlds, and in the hall of heaven
I sit me central, radiant as the Sun."
Then spake the Prophet, "Friend, thy steed is warm :
Spur him no more. The mirror in thy heart
Did slip its fleshly case, now put it up—
Hide it once more, or thou wilt come to harm."[1]

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[1] Cf. F. Max Müller, *Theosophy or Psychological Religion*, p. 348.

VI

SUFFERING, SIN AND JUDGEMENT[1]

KARMA

BOTH the degree of originality and the full significance of the Sadhu's teaching on Suffering, Sin and Judgement will escape us unless we see them in their relation, on the one hand to the conception of the Wrath of God, which still largely dominates traditional Christian teaching, and on the other to the Hindu doctrine of Karma.

The Sadhu believes firmly in retribution. But he regards this as being brought about by an *internal* necessity, an inevitable degeneration of the personality which brings its own punishment in that it completely incapacitates for the life of Heaven. He does not regard it as the expression of the Divine anger, for God to him is wholly seen in Christ, and, to recall a saying of his already quoted, "Jesus Christ is never annoyed with anybody."

[1] The greater part of the materials for this chapter have been taken from the Tamil collection of the Sadhu's addresses.

"As men have chosen sin, they must die in sin. God does not bring about this death. God sends no one to hell. The sinner himself brings this punishment down on himself. Let us look at the case of Judas Iscariot. When he betrayed the Lord, Pilate did not hang him, nor did the High Priest, nor did our loving Saviour, nor did the Apostles. He hanged himself. He committed suicide. He died in his sin. This is the end of him who lives in sin."

But the Love of God is always there, ready to intervene and to counteract the retributory process. But God does not effect this by an arbitrary and external "forgiveness," a mere remission of penalty; He works by changing the heart and thereby curing the moral disease which is at the root of sin. Only man *must repent.*

The doctrine of Karma teaches that any sorrow, misfortune, degradation or disease from which the individual may now be suffering is an exact and just retribution for some sin committed by him or her in a previous incarnation. This comes about through an automatically working law of cause and consequence. And by the same law every sin we commit in this life will be paid for by an equivalent in suffering when we return to earth in our next reincarnation. Necessarily this doctrine can admit no remission of sin.[1]

[1] Popular Hinduism provides various ways of obtaining remission of

The Sadhu's insistence that retribution is automatic and is not to be ascribed to the Divine Wrath is inspired by his passionate apprehension of the Love of God. In support of it he appeals to certain passages in St. John's Gospel. But, though the doctrine is certainly predominant in this Gospel, it may be doubted whether the Sadhu would have found it there so easily had he not been already familiar with the doctrine of Karma. If this be so, it is one little instance of the way in which, as Westcott prophesied, India, if converted, will bring new light to the interpretation of St. John. Yet, even within the conception of an automatic retribution, there is still a subtle but important difference between the Sadhu's doctrine and the idea of Karma. To the Sadhu retribution is the result of an internal change, organic to the personality. Karma represents it as dependent upon circumstances predominantly external.

But the same conviction of the love of Christ which makes the Sadhu adopt an almost Indian conception of retribution causes him emphatically to reject other aspects of the doctrine of Karma,

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sins, such as bathing in certain waters, especially at particular festivals. But this can only be reconciled with the doctrine of Karma by attributing an ethical value to non-ethical observances, which completely deprives that doctrine of its title to be regarded as the expression of a passionless justice. But it is precisely the moral appeal which the idea of passionless justice makes to many minds which gives to the doctrine of Karma its chief claim to be taken seriously.

in particular, its negation of the possibility of forgiveness and its conception of suffering as necessarily penal. Of the two it is the latter against which he more frequently protests, since, in spite of the book of Job and the teaching of our Lord, it is also potent in popular Christianity. Here again he can appeal to the authority of St. John, "Neither did this man sin nor his parents; but that the works of God should be made manifest in him." But his Philosophy of the Cross is also here involved. To endure slights, ill-usage or bodily pain is to share the cross of Christ. To endure them nobly and without resentment is to reproduce His character and therefore silently to proclaim His message and His power. Hence, to the Sadhu, suffering is not a penalty; it is sometimes a medicine, always an opportunity.

Suffering

"God is Love, and therefore He will not punish. I do not agree with those who say that sickness and misfortune are punishments. They are what I should call 'the loving slap.' A doctor was telling me of an experience he had. Before a child is born it cannot breathe, but as soon as it is born it breathes. But it is necessary for the child to cry. If the child does not cry

his lungs are contracted and he dies. One child was unable to breathe when he was born and within a few minutes would have died. So the nurse gave him a slap. The mother must have thought : 'She came to help me, but she is killing my son. It is only a few minutes since he was born and now she is giving him a slap.' Through that slap she made the child cry. When the child began to cry he began to breathe. Just so God sometimes gives us a loving slap."

"Once while coming down a mountain I sat down in the porch of a house. A strong wind began to blow. A little bird came along helplessly driven by this wind. From another direction a hawk swooped down on the little bird to make a prey of it. The little bird, faced by danger from two directions, fell into my lap. This bird never likes to come to men and yet it sought refuge with me in the day of trouble. So the strong wind of suffering drives us into the lap of God.

"In Karachi I was bathing in the sea. I went far into the sea without knowing it. I saw a big wave sweeping toward me like a wall, and, full of fear, I prayed to God. What happened was that this wave took me safely ashore. I thought it would be impossible to return. I was afraid I would perish in the wave. And yet, without killing me, it brought me safely ashore. So does suffering for us."

"Once in the course of my travels I saw a shepherd. It was his habit to take his cattle across a river, let them graze till evening and then take them back across the river. That evening all the cattle went across except a cow and a calf which seemed unwilling to go over to the other side of the river. Afraid that if he let them stay there wild beasts might make short work of them in the course of the night, he lashed them and thus sought to make them go across the river. That was of no use. He then held before them some hay and tried to lure them across. That too proved futile. Then I suggested to him: 'Carry the calf across; the cow will then follow you easily.' He carried the calf and the cow followed him. In the same way, when we are unwilling to reach our Lord, He separates from us our dear ones and takes them away to Himself. We are thus led to desire the heavenly regions where our dear ones have gone and to fit ourselves for them."

May we not surmise that this last thought was suggested to the Sadhu by reflexion on the death of his mother, of whom he speaks so often and so fondly, and its effect upon his own religious quest?

"Sorrow and misfortune draw us near to God and fit us for His service. Many regard misfortune as nothing but punishment for sin.

And yet suffering and the way we suffer is a splendid way of serving God, an effective way of glorifying Him.

"Let us look at the case of poor Lazarus. He was full of sores. These sores are not said to have been the result of his sin. Or he would not have obtained the great privilege of being in Abraham's bosom. His sores and the way he endured them were the great sermon he preached to others. By this service which he rendered many were led to praise God.

"But, some one will say, 'That is very fine. But does God afflict the innocent in order that He may be glorified?' Let us observe, however, the reward which God gave him after this brief period of trouble. He tells him, 'I bore the Cross and you also bore the Cross. Now I am reigning and you shall reign with me.'"

"The Hindu doctrine of transmigration is an attempt to solve the problem of suffering, but it is not satisfactory. If one man is a Rajah, another a coolie in this life, it explains that this is because the Rajah was a good man, the coolie a bad one, in a previous life. A certain Rajah's criticism of the doctrine was this: if a finger is badly scratched the injury is obvious, but the bone may be broken and there is nothing to show. My life is one long round of anxieties and burdens, though I appear as living in state

and luxury. The coolie has not a care to trouble him. I must have sinned in a previous life and the coolie have been the saint."

"We praise thee, Lord, for the joys and sufferings which thou hast sent us in the past and which thou sendest us now. By bearing Thy Cross will the bliss of Heaven become very sweet to us. For he who has not endured suffering cannot know the reality of joy."

SIN

"One day I was sitting on a rock. I saw below me a bird hopping along slowly. I stooped down and tried to see what was happening. What did I see? A snake was drawing the bird toward itself by its magnetic power. Drawn by the fascinating eye of the serpent, the bird unconsciously came very near the serpent. As soon as the serpent knew that the bird was its own and could not possibly escape, it caught the bird and devoured it. But the bird might have escaped the serpent at a distance. In the same manner, Satan endeavours to draw us to himself by his coaxing and pleasant ways. There is only one way of escaping him. Instead of turning our hearts towards him, we must attempt to fix our hearts on God.

"The saying 'whosoever is begotten of God

sinneth not'[1] used to perplex me, but now I understand it. Sin is generally the result of a desire to obtain pleasure. But the man who loves God has such deep and unfailing springs of joy in himself that he is not drawn to any other kind of pleasure, and therefore does not sin; just as the man who owns a sovereign has no use for a defaced farthing.

"There was a girl in a village. Every day she dusted off the cobwebs in her room. Once while doing this she thought about herself and prayed, 'Lord, as I am cleaning my room, clean thou my heart of all sin.' Then a voice was heard in the air, 'Daughter, what is the use of sweeping away only the cobwebs every day? It is better to destroy the spider that spins the cobwebs. If you kill the spider there won't be any more cobwebs.' Likewise it is not enough that our daily sins be forgiven, but, as the Apostle says, the old man in us should die.

"Roman Catholics make a great deal of the forgiveness of sins in Absolution: but the disease, which is the root of the sin, is working all the same.

"Sin is not only a disease, but a contagious disease. But when the Sun of Righteousness shines the germs are killed."

"Do you think," we asked, "that penitent

[1] 1 John v. 18.

sinners should be continually thinking of their sin and renewing their contrition?"

"Don't trouble about God forgiving or not forgiving your sin. Salvation is not forgiveness of sin, but freedom from sin. There was a consumptive in Sikkim who became delirious. Some fruits and a knife were placed by the side of his bed. A friend called on him. Unwittingly he took the knife and cut the throat of his friend. For this he was to be hung at 5 P.M. on a certain day. His friends and relations went to the King and begged for his forgiveness as he was not responsible for his action. But when they returned they were told that he had already died—from consumption. His crime was the result of his disease. The crime was forgiven, but the disease itself, which was the root of the crime, was not healed. That is why the word of God says: 'Ye shall die in your sins.' God will not kill you. But the disease, which is the root of the sins, is working all the same.

"It is a healthy sign to feel that we are sinners. It is dangerous when we do not feel it. Once while bathing in the river Sutlej I sank deep into the water. Above my head were tons of water and yet I did not feel the burden at all. When I came back to the bank, I lifted a pot filled with water and found it very heavy. As

long as I was in the water I did not feel the weight. Similarly a sinner does not feel that he is a sinner as long as he lives in sin.

"Coal is black—we cannot remove its blackness. You can use a hundred pounds of soap but you will not take away its blackness. But put it in the fire and its blackness goes, it becomes shining bright. So when we receive that baptism of fire by the Holy Spirit which comes into our lives when we give our hearts to Christ we sinners shine before the world. That is what Christ meant when He said, 'Ye are the light of the world.'

"If we continue in sin our conscience, which is the eye of the soul, becomes blind:

"I once saw a Tibetan monk who had spent many years meditating in a dark cave. When he came out he could not see anything. His eyes were pale and yellow. On my way back to India from Japan I met a scientist. He had some blind fish in a jar. They were beautiful but had no eyes: only a superficial mark remaining to show that they once possessed them. Because they had lived in the dark and did not use their eyes, they lost them.

"Once in the Himalayas I ate a poisonous plant and for three days my tongue was numbed, I could not taste anything. Just so it is possible to lose one's taste for the Divine—that is, to

lose one's conscience by tasting the poisonous fruit of sin.

"I once saw a sweeper carrying a pan of ordure in one hand, the stench of which made me almost vomit. But the sweeper was so used to it that with his spare hand he was holding food to his mouth and eating it. Just so, we are so habituated to the sin and evil of the world that we live in it quite unconcerned. But Christ would have felt in the midst of it as I felt when the sweeper passed me. Accordingly, it is a mistake to think of the suffering of Christ as being confined to the Crucifixion. Christ was thirty-three years upon the Cross."

Repentance

"I was travelling with some others on the Himalayas. One of our party began to be very thirsty. When we reached a high spot we noticed that there was a little water in the midst of a morass. This young man wanted to go and drink that water. His brother who knew that spot well reiterated: 'It is impossible to go there and return. All who ever went there perished in the mud. If you will only wait for a little while there is a village five miles away and you can drink water there.' We too implored him in the same way. But he was determined

to go and walked towards the water, saying: 'There is no mud here. As it is morning the water is frozen here.' He got to the water and also drank it. But when he sought to return his feet began to sink into the mud. He went down as far as his knees. In trying to get out he sank still deeper and deeper, first as far as his waist and then as far as his neck. There was no means of getting him out. We had no rope long enough to help him. If any one had gone to rescue him it was certain that he also would perish. And he wailed at the thought of perishing thus, though he had known beforehand of the danger. But of what avail was that? He died. Many love the things of the world, though they know that they cannot satisfy their souls' thirst with them, and though they know that they will prove dangerous. Such will surely perish. Let us turn our hearts, not towards the world, but towards Him who is able to satisfy this thirst, and live.

"In Tibet there was a village where there was no water. The people of the village had to bring the water in from a fresh spring about two miles away. Some of them did not like this and so dug a tank. They thought that the tank would be filled with rain water which they would use, and that it would be unnecessary to go to the trouble of bringing water from a spot

two miles away. When the rains came the tank which they dug was filled with water. As usual some went to the clear and fresh spring two miles away and brought in the water. Others laughed at them and mocked them, calling them madmen. Without much trouble they drank the water in the tank, but all those who drank the water died, as there was poisonous matter in it. Though those who brought the water from the spring two miles away had worked hard, they lived. In the same way it is hard to love the Lord and hate the world, but it is the way of life.

"One day a hunter went out hunting. All the stones he had with him were exhausted. He wanted to sling a stone at a bird on a tree. Seeing a vessel near-by full of beautiful stones, he took them and hurled them at the bird with his sling. They fell into the river. Only one stone was left. The hunter took it home to give it to his child as a plaything. On the way he met a diamond merchant who promised to give him as much as a thousand rupees for the stone. He did not agree to it. Then said the diamond merchant to him : 'Take home with you as many rupees as you can carry within the next hour and a half, only give me the stone.' The hunter agreed to this and took home a bag full of rupees, and came back for the next bag.

There were only a few more minutes left for him. He took another bag full of money and walked home, weeping and lamenting. 'You are very mad,' said the people to him. 'Instead of thanking God for all this money which He has given you, you are weeping.' 'I am indeed thankful to God,' wailed he, 'but I was fool enough not to understand the value of this stone. I wasted several stones like this in the water. If I had only kept them I might have become a millionaire.' Every day of our lives is a precious stone. We have wasted many. This may be our last. So let us repent *now*.

"There was a poor man in Northern India. He had a large debt. He had nothing with which to pay off the debt. He was too lazy to earn the money. Those who lent him the money made up their minds to put him in prison. But there was a wealthy and generous man in that place. Hearing of this man's wretched condition, he wanted to help him. As he did not want that any one else should know of this, he came after twelve o'clock in the night with all kinds of food and five hundred rupees—his debt was not as large as this—to the house. He stood knocking at the door for an hour, but the man in the house was too lazy to open it. Then the rich man returned home disgusted and feeling that he was not fit to be helped. The

next morning the poor man heard of what had happened and was filled with sorrow. But what was the use? Behold, the King of Kings is standing at our door ready to pay off all our debt of sin. He knocks at the door with divine food in His hand, food which will strengthen us and give us power to win victory over our spiritual enemies. Let us not be lazy and indifferent like that man, but open the door immediately. Then heavenly peace and joy will become ours. Our heart itself will become heaven.

"Satan frequently confuses with doubt even true Christians. But by the grace of God the saintly man escapes this. To illustrate this let me tell you an incident which actually happened. A certain Saint before his conversion had committed many crimes. But after his conversion he served the Lord with his whole mind and led a holy life. When he was on his death-bed Satan brought him a catalogue of his previous sins and said, 'You have done all these things. You are not fit to enter heaven. Hell is your place.' Thus did Satan frighten him. But the Saint said, 'My Saviour will in no wise cast out him that cometh to Him. If we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.' In spite of this, Satan continued to trouble him, but the Saint was not discouraged but continued

steadily in prayer. Then a finger appeared and cancelled the catalogue of sins. The Saint, rejoicing at this, began praising God. But Satan said, 'Do not rejoice at this. You may reach Heaven, but your sin will always stand in the sight of all; so you will be ashamed before all.' The Saint prayed again. Then a drop of Christ's blood fell on the catalogue. Spreading all over, it washed away all the letters and made the paper white. Seeing this the Saint was filled with a divine joy and peacefully entered God's presence.

"Let us look at the three crosses on Calvary. He who hung in the centre died *for* sin. One of the thieves was penitent and anxiously pleaded with the Lord. He heard his prayer and promised him that he would be with Him that day in Paradise. He went with Christ to Paradise, not after many days, but that very day. He died *to* sin and lived in Christ. The other thief sought to save his body without being penitent. 'If you are the Son of God, save yourself and us,' he said. He lived for his body and died *in* sin. Though near the Lord of Life, he died in sin without being saved.

"Friend, what is your condition? Are you dead in sin or have you died to sin?"

JUDGEMENT

This section must be supplemented by the more esoteric teaching expressed in the Visions recorded in the previous chapter, if we wish to obtain a complete idea of the Sadhu's views on Judgement. As we have already indicated, in his public addresses he strongly emphasises the certainty of retribution, but never even hints at his hope of an ultimate salvation, though of a lower degree, for all or almost all men.

" Many comfort themselves by saying, ' God is Love. In some way or another He will save and redeem us in the end.' In the end those will be disillusioned.

" In the Himalayas there is a native Prince, forgiving and generous-hearted. One evening, while out for a drive, a man who had stolen some things from a clothes store and run away was caught and brought before him. The Rajah warned him and said : ' This time I forgive you because I am not in my court. But you must not do this again.' But the man did not give up his habits as a thief. Another day when the Rajah was out driving they brought the man to him again. This time also he forgave him. Gaining boldness he went from bad to worse until he killed a man and was charged with murder. They brought him to the court. He came into

the court with great fear, but as soon as he saw the face of the judge he became bold and happy. 'This is the generous Rajah who forgave me twice. This time also he will forgive me,' he thought. When the Rajah saw him he was sorry for him and said, 'Friend, you ought to have given up your evil ways long ago. I forgave you several times. This time also I wish to forgive you. But what can I do? Here not I, but this law book is the judge, and by it you are condemned to be hanged.' The same will happen on that Great Day too. God is Love, but listen to what the Saviour says: 'And if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day' (John xii. 47-48).

"Once I lifted a big stone. Under it were countless insects. As soon as they saw the light they were terrified and ran to and fro in trepidation. I put the stone back in its place and they became quiet. When the Sun of Righteousness appears on that day this scene will be reproduced. Those who live in darkness and lead sinful lives will see the sins which they committed in the dark revealed. For 'there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; and

hid, that shall not be known' (Matt. x. 26). In His light the sins hidden in their hearts and lives will be made plain. They will be filled with terror and trepidation.

"Observe the cobra; however often it may slough its skin, it remains a cobra. In the same way, a sinner, even though he leaves his body, will remain a sinner in the next world. Character does not change with death.

"A sinner is a traitor against God. A man who is a traitor against one country can escape by taking refuge in another. But is there any kingdom where one may take refuge after being a traitor to God's kingdom? Sin will catch him who runs away from God on account of sin. Death will overtake him who runs away from God to escape death. In Tibet a man killed another man. The Government decreed that the murderer should be hanged. By making an opening in the mud wall of the prison with a nail he escaped into the forest. But unable to bear the extreme cold he died there. Death caught him who sought to escape death.

"Prayer and Meditation avail to wash away sin:

"In the south of Bhutan there is a dense jungle where men hunt tigers and other big game. There was a lodge where they could take shelter in case of danger; the hunters carried with

them the key of this lodge. One day a hunter started out, gun in hand. Suddenly he saw a tiger coming after him, and thinking that he could get into the lodge, threw his gun aside and ran toward it. He reached the door and looked for the key. But he had left it behind. Instantly the tiger leapt upon him and killed him. Between where he stood and the inside of the lodge was but an inch, but the thickness of the door. And yet he had to lose his life because he had been careless about his key. He would have died if he had been ten miles away from the lodge. He died none the less when he was very near to it. Though near the Kingdom of God, many Christians are careless about its key. What is that key? It is repentance and continued prayer.

"While travelling on the Himalayas with some others, I saw a man who had come from a hot country. We warned him and said: 'Wrap up your hands and feet well or they will be destroyed with the cold.' 'I can believe that they will be destroyed by heat. But it is foolish to think that cold will hurt them,' said he, and neglected our warning. After a few days I met him again. His whole hand had been destroyed by frost. And he cried bitterly that the snow should have done him such damage. But of what avail his sorrow now?

"One day a man was standing under the shadow of a tree. Speaking to the shadow he said, 'O Shadow! You know for certain that *you* will come here thus once in every twenty-four hours, but I am not certain that *I* shall return here. And yet I have nothing ready to offer God in the next world.' . . . Yes, there is a certainty that many things will come back, but there is no certainty that the opportunity for repentance will come again."

VII

THE HEART AND THE HEAD

A Reaction against Intellectualism

"Religion is a matter of heart. If we give our hearts we can understand its truth. You can find it, not through the intellect nor through the eyes, but only through depth of heart. Other lessons we have to learn from books ; to know Jesus Christ does not require book knowledge, but you have to give your heart."

The antithesis of the Heart and the Head occupies very much the same position in the teaching of the Sadhu as the antithesis between Faith and Works in the teaching of St. Paul—and for essentially the same reason. To each of them his antithesis expresses, on the one hand, an affirmation of that Christocentric mysticism which is to him the essence of religion, and on the other a strong reaction against a religious philosophy from which he has emerged. To St. Paul, Faith, in this connexion, is not assent to

a credal proposition, but the utter devotion of the lover to the Beloved, the primal movement of the soul towards mystic union with its Lord. This same devotion, this same movement, is what the Sadhu means when he says, "Give your heart to Christ: yield yourself to Him, let Him take possession of you." "Sometimes I have tried to keep myself from sinning, but I could not overcome temptations. When I gave my heart to Jesus Christ it was quite possible." What is this but St. Paul's doctrine that we are "justified" through faith in Jesus Christ alone?

Such difference as there is between the antitheses of St. Paul and of the Sadhu is due to the difference of the systems against which they protest. St. Paul has felt, thought out, and therefore stated, his experience in relation to a Jewish Legalism, which conceives God primarily as Transcendent and as Judge. The Sadhu feels and states his in relation to a Hindu philosophy which makes God the Universal Immanent Life. By "Works" St. Paul means a doctrine of salvation by the rigid observance of a meticulous system of rules whether ceremonial or moral. By "the Head" the Sadhu means a doctrine of salvation by knowledge. "I met a Hindu Sannyasi who said, '*Jnana-marga*'—that is, Knowledge—'is necessary for salvation.' I told him that in order to quench thirst it is necessary to have water, it is not necessary to

know that it is composed of oxygen and hydrogen. Some Hindu Sannyasis are very learned men, but they have no peace."

The doctrine of salvation by Knowledge is almost—not quite—as strongly entrenched in Hindu thought as the doctrine of salvation by works of the Law was in the Jewish system against which St. Paul reacted; and just as there were some Jews, and those not shallow souls, who could find religious contentment within and through the Law—witness the author of the one hundred and nineteenth Psalm—so it has been with Hinduism and the way of salvation through knowledge. Yet despite this, the protest of the Sadhu, like that of St. Paul, is fully justified, if we view the thing they criticise as a whole and not merely its exceptional products.

In England or America those who are interested in religion at all think of it mainly in its relation to practical ethics. The last subject on which the average educated man is capable of talking with fluency and ease is the philosophy of religion. It is quite otherwise in India. Brahminism has impressed the multitude with an elaborate cultus, it has implanted in the educated a passion for philosophical speculation. That the first thing in religion is neither ritual nor metaphysic, but a new heart, is a truism in the West. In India it is not yet so.

Of course, in a country so concerned with religion as India, there have been numerous protests against the servitude of the many to superstition and of the few to intellectualism. The very influential Bhakti school protests strongly against the dominance of intellectualism in religion. Indeed there is not a little in the Sadhu's attitude on this subject which would entirely commend itself to a devotee of Bhakti.

The Sadhu is no more an enemy of knowledge than St. Paul was an enemy of good works, but he is violently in revolt against those who would set it in the first place. We must remember also, if we are fully to appreciate the meaning of his reiterated depreciation of the things of the head, that in India the missionary has often to face the objection that many Englishmen of ability and education, though brought up in Christianity, have in fact discarded it. Again, is it not possible that even among persons learned in theology he may have met some who yet seemed strangely blind to the weightier matters of the law!

In religion the one thing needful is a fine sense for spiritual values—the eye to see the vision and the will to follow it. And it was not the Sadhu who first made the discovery that these things are sometimes hidden from the wise and prudent and revealed to babes.

The Function of Intellect

Change the terminology a little, substitute for " heart " the " conative and emotional aspects of the self," and for " head " read " the reflective faculty "—and what the Sadhu has to say on the function of intellect comes very near to what some modern psychologists are teaching.

" The heart is the innermost part of our soul. It receives, as it were, wireless messages from the unseen world. The head is concerned with visible things. It is the heart that sees and feels the heart of spiritual reality. My head acquiesces in what I have seen with my heart. If I had not seen them first, my head would not have believed them. The heart is beyond the head.

" Knowledge obtained by the head does not go down below the throat. I once picked a stone out of a pool and broke it. About six or seven inches of it were wet, but inside and in the centre that stone was quite dry. That stone was in the water but the water was not in the stone. It is the same with men. Some in the Christian Church know a great deal about Him, but the centre of their heart is dry. Christ is not in their hearts.

" Sometimes I have been asked by lowly people in India, ' If learned men do not believe in Christianity, then how can we believe ? ' I

said : 'It is a most foolish thing to ask them. They may be specialists on the subjects on which they spend their lives, their opinion on these is of great value ; but in spiritual things they may be like children—they may know nothing. The man of prayer is the only one whose opinion is worth having in regard to religion. Mystics are the specialists in religion.' "

" But," we asked, " how can one test the validity for others of the knowledge which the mystic obtains by direct incommunicable intuition ? "

" From his life you can be sure that the mystic is not telling an untruth. Therefore he should be listened to. Then try and live out what he says in your own experience."

" It is foolish in religious matters to accept the judgement of scientists who have no spiritual experience. Learned men, who can find out when an eclipse of the sun will take place, may know nothing of the eclipse of sin."

The highest kind of spiritual knowledge is not attained by the mere exercise of the intellect, but by the strengthening and illumining of the intellect by Christ. " The eyes have the capacity to see, but they cannot see until the rays of light fall on them. So the eyes of the intellect have the capacity to see, but they cannot see until the rays from the Sun of Righteousness fall on them."

Vain Enquiry

"One day a father took a ball of string which was all in a tangle and tried to unravel it. It took several hours for him to do so. His little son, who was observing him, took another piece of string, and tying one end to a tree made a noose at the other. Then he put the noose around his neck and contrived to hang himself, while the father was still intent on the tangle. His mother saw her son thus hanging and came running to the spot. 'Wretch!' she cried. 'The child is dying. Instead of saving him you are straightening out a tangle in your string.' By that time the child was dead. Such is the result of vain enquiry. The time so spent might have been used for saving millions of perishing souls.

"Some years ago I saw a child with an onion in his hand and he was taking off its many skins one by one. He said, 'I am removing its covers of skins to see what is inside.' I said, 'It is made of skins only.' But he said, 'I am sure there must be something in it.' He kept on peeling the skins off until there was nothing left. Lots of people act like that with religion. They are always asking questions, with the result that they cannot find anything of the spiritual vision.

"Some time ago I was talking to a friend of

mine in India, a very clever man, a chemist. He took a cup of milk and began to analyse it. He told us that there was so much water, so much sugar, and so much of other things. He could tell us all that; but I said, 'A little child cannot analyse this milk, but he knows two things from his experience. He knows it is sweet and he knows it is making him stronger. He is getting stronger day by day. He cannot explain to you how it happens, but he knows it. But you,' I said to my friend, 'by your analysing of it derive no benefit from it, and you spoil the milk.' This child is wiser than the chemist."

"But," we objected, "in the long run does not the chemist do good by his analysis?"

"Yes, but there are some people who do nothing but analyse their milk all the time. They never drink it."

"A man came to our Saviour with a withered hand. The Saviour knew his desire to be healed. He said, 'Stretch forth thy hand': the man did so, and it was made whole. If he had argued he would not have been healed. He did not want to argue with his Saviour. He was able to stretch forth his hand. I must do the same and believe the truth. We shall see wonderful things if we obey."

The Moral Obstacle

Moral obtuseness, the Sadhu thinks, is often at the root of unbelief. "Many people are not able to understand and perceive spiritual truth because they are numb with sin. They are like a leper whose leg was burnt in the fire and yet who was so numb that he did not feel the pain. Repent of your sins and ask God's forgiveness Then you will feel Christ's presence. Christ's presence cannot be explained. It must be felt."

"In such cases," we asked, "how do you try and arouse people out of this numbness?" "I speak of Christ, who is the only hope for leprosy."

"'I have seen a bridge of water over water.' Once when preaching I said this to the people. They said, 'There might be a bridge of wood or stone, but how could there be a bridge of water?' In that part of the world they never have cold weather and have never seen the surface of a river hard and frozen. That was the bridge of water over the water, but they could not understand. How can a man who has always lived in a hot country understand that there can be a bridge of water over the water? Just so, those who are living in their sins are like men who never go up to the high mountains where the bridge of water over the water can be seen, and thus they

cannot understand religious truth ; but those who are living a life of prayer are like men who are living in cold countries, they can understand."

Knowledge of Christ

The Sadhu frequently stresses the distinction between "knowing" Christ and "knowing about" Christ. "St. Paul said, 'I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed.' He suffered many things for many years, but he was not ashamed because he knew Him in whom he believed. Nowadays there are many people who know about Jesus Christ but very few who can say, 'I know whom I have believed.' Those who are bigoted in their religion, they also 'know about' Jesus Christ, but they do not 'know' Him. To know Him and to know about Him is a great difference. St. Paul must have seen Him and heard about Him before he was converted. When he knew about Jesus Christ he used to persecute the Christians, but when he got to know Christ he himself was persecuted.

"Last month when one of my Indian friends was shown a daffodil, he was surprised. He knew a great deal about that flower : he used to read about it for examinations, the poetry of Wordsworth told him something about daffodils,

but he had never seen one and he could not recognise it when he was told. It is quite possible for many people to know a lot about Christ without knowing Him. Those who know Him will find peace and joy and happiness and salvation.

"Many souls have been saved in India, some of whom are very simple men. One man I know there is quite illiterate, but a wonderful man when he bears his witness. He used to say, 'I was a "sweeper,"[1] but now, by His grace, I am a "son." I know Him, because He is in my heart; and if you will give your heart to Him you will know Him too.'"

A student at Oxford, a candidate for the Pass Degree, was much impressed at a meeting in which the Sadhu discoursed on these lines. He rushed off to the Head of a Theological College and said: "I agree with the Sadhu about the uselessness of getting mere knowledge. As soon as I get my B.A. I am going out as a missionary. I don't think I need any theological training." This was reported to the Sadhu, who said: "That is not what I meant. Ministers do need training. What I meant was that learning without life is dry bones." He continued: "I am

[1] The "sweepers" who do scavenging and other such work are one of the lowest castes in India.

not opposed to knowledge as such. Only I am raising a strong protest against the modern tendency to emphasise learning too much. Let me give you an illustration. Luther vehemently emphasised justification by faith as a protest against the Roman emphasis on works. He did not despise works altogether."

Already in New Testament times there were those who, from St. Paul's reiterated emphasis on faith, deduced that good works could be dispensed with. In his epistles we are told (2 Peter iii. 16) "are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest . . . unto their own destruction." If by a similar reiteration of the importance of a heart's devotion to Christ, the Sadhu has laid himself open to a similar misinterpretation—he has done it in good company.

VIII

NATURE AND THE BIBLE

The Book of Nature

Nature has an extraordinary fascination for the Sadhu. But he does not love Nature in the spirit of St. Francis, preaching to the swallows or singing his canticle to "brother Sun." Nor, again, has he that feeling of immanent Divinity which marks the nature-mysticism of Wordsworth. The Sadhu's point of view is much nearer to the Hebrew. The Hebrew attitude is thus described by Dr. Sanday in an unpublished paper written just before his death: "The Greeks studied nature for its own sake: they observed it for its own sake and they analysed it for its own sake. As their disciples, we do the same. But the Hebrew Prophets cared very little for these things. They were interested in nature, and have left behind them magnificent descriptions of nature: but that was not for the sake of a purely calm contemplation of nature in itself. They always had an ulterior

object; they were always thinking of nature as the handiwork and expression of God. What they, the Hebrew prophets, were really bent upon was, as I said, the things of the spirit. And as many of these things could not, or could not readily, be expressed directly, they were glad to express them indirectly: and as nature is full of analogies between the things of the body or material things, and the things of the spirit, they were glad to make use of these analogies in their task of expounding these latter to the mind of their hearers. In other words, they used them not for their own sake but as symbols."

"The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament showeth his handiwork." The Sadhu loves Nature not so much because he feels God *in* Nature, but because God made Nature and Nature is to him an open book speaking in parables about the things of God. He loves the beauty, especially the snow-clad beauty of the Himalayas, but it is less for the sake of the beauty itself than because in those eternal solitudes it is easier to hold communion with God and to read the great truths, which are written, as he says, all over Nature in capital letters. Not only beautiful but also unattractive sights of Nature—barren stretches of sand, festering decay—discourse to him in parables of God. Hence the phrase he so often uses—the Book of Nature.

The saint or the genius ever fails to comprehend why other people cannot see what is so obvious to himself. So the Sadhu wonders why there are so few who habitually read the Book of Nature and derive from it the comfort and inspiration which he himself finds there. The fruits of his reading in that book are the illustrations and parables which make up the greater part of his teaching.

" To read other books you must master painfully the language in which those books are written, but this is not so with the Book of Nature. It is written in a language which is simple and intelligible to all." " Live with Christ, and the Book of Nature will be clear to you." To the Sadhu it is rest as well as illumination. Asked what relaxation he had, living as he did a life of high tension, he said, " Reading the pages of the Book of Nature." The thought of crossing the English Channel on his way to Paris filled him with delight, for it would provide him with another opportunity to study Nature. He stood on the deck and gazed at the deep blue sea, joy beaming on his face.

He compares and contrasts the Bible and the Book of Nature.

" The Bible and the Book of Nature are both written in spiritual language by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit being the author of life, all

Nature, instinct with life, is the work of the Holy Spirit, and the language in which it is written is spiritual language. Those who are born again have the Holy Spirit for their mother. So to them the language of the Bible and of Nature is their mother tongue, which they easily and naturally understand." The difference, however, between the Bible and the Book of Nature is this: "The message of the Bible is simple, direct and straightforward, whereas the message of the Book of Nature has to be spelt out carefully letter by letter." In the Bible itself the Sadhu discovers instances of a use of the Book of Nature similar to his own, in passages like "Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow,"[1] or "He shall be like a tree planted by the water-side, that bringeth forth his fruit in due season."[2] Curiously enough he did not mention in this connexion the parables of our Lord.

He was asked, "Is there any difference between your study and the Hindu's study of the Book of Nature? Did not the Hindu seers, the poets of the Vedic hymns, also read the pages of the Book of Nature?" "Yes, they did," he replied, "but they lost God in Nature. The Christian mystic finds God in Nature. The Hindu mystic thinks that God and Nature are the same. The Christian mystic knows that

[1] Ps. li. 7. [2] Ps. i. 3.

there must be a Creator who has created the creation."

The Sadhu remarked that to him the Book of Nature of which he speaks includes also human nature. His illustrations are drawn not only from trees, plants and animals, rivers and mountains, but from the varied drama of human life. But though men and women, with their motives and their difficulties, furnish him with abundant material for shrewd and observant contemplation, he does not view humanity with the eye of a Dickens delighting in its idiosyncrasies, or of a Meredith turning his microscope upon its subtlest intricacies, but rather with that of a preacher, who is also an artist, seeing everywhere the material for a telling parable. Moreover, though interested in men and their ways, he is nothing of a sightseer. When he was in Oxford boat races were in progress, but he declined an invitation to go and see them. Nor did he display any special pleasure in the fine buildings and other sights of the city. He does, indeed, take pleasure in visiting new scenes; but this springs more, we surmise, from a desire to get a sort of bird's-eye view of God's world than from anything like the zest for exploration which fires the ordinary traveller. He is glad to see famous cities; but "I don't like cities," he said once, "they are rough pages of the Book of Nature."

The Bible

When asked which were his favourite books of the Bible, the Sadhu answered, "The Bible, like a lump of sugar, is sweet to me at whatever point I taste it." Nevertheless he does in practice draw distinctions. The New Testament is the staple of his spiritual food. This, on account of its smaller size, he is able always to carry with him, in the Urdu version, being, indeed, beside his blanket and his robe, his only earthly possession. In his addresses he constantly quotes the New Testament, but only rarely refers to the Old—and then usually to the Psalms. Of the visions in Ezekiel he said once, "They are riddles. Sometimes you catch a glimpse of their meaning and sometimes not." And when asked whether he was specially attracted to the Book of Revelation, he replied, "Not very much." The Gospel of St. John is the book which he reads most often and to which he most often refers.

Asked why he is so much drawn to St. John's Gospel, he replied that it was because it is so simple and yet so deep; and also because, being written by the beloved disciple of Jesus, it gives a new and marvellous insight into His character and possesses a charm all its own. "St. John leaned on Christ's breast. He had a warm heart and spoke, not mouth to mouth, but heart to

heart with Jesus. So he understood Him better." Again, "St. John bore witness for Him whom he knew. He did not say 'whom I have read of in books or heard about as the Saviour of the world,' but 'whom we have looked upon.' He lived with Him three years, day and night. He loved our Saviour more than others, and he could understand the love of his Saviour and bear witness for Him. How many of us could say the same thing, that we have heard and seen Him, that our hands have handled Him, that we can bear witness for Him?" It is the Sadhu's desire some day to expound the Gospel of St. John, using his own characteristic method of illustration. It is to be hoped he may carry out his intention.

"When I was travelling in the Central Provinces, I was talking to some non-Christians about our living Saviour. I finished speaking, and I asked those people if any one would like to read the Bible to know something more about Jesus Christ. There was a man there, an enemy of Christianity. He took a copy of St. John's Gospel. He read two or three sentences, and then straightway tore it into pieces and threw it away. This was in a compartment in the train. After two years I heard a wonderful story. The same day that this man took St. John's Gospel and tore it up into pieces and threw it out of the

window, a seeker after truth was going along the railway line. He was a real seeker after truth. For six or seven years he had tried his hardest to find the truth; but he was not satisfied. As he was going along the railway line thinking over these things, he found the torn pieces of the Gospel, and he took them up and began to read. He saw the words 'everlasting life.' According to Hinduism it may be true that we are not going to die, but that we shall live through transmigration, and come back again into this world. But 'everlasting life'! Then in another piece of the Gospel he saw the words 'the Bread of Life.' He was anxious to know something about it. What was that Bread of Life? He showed the pieces to another man and said to him, 'Can you tell me what this book is? I am sorry that somebody tore it up.' The man said, 'That is Christian. You must not read it. You will be defiled. You must not read such books.' At last he said, 'I must know something more. There is no danger in knowing more about these things.' He went and bought a copy of the New Testament and began to read it—and he found our Saviour. Now he is a preacher of the Gospel in the Central Provinces. Really the torn pieces of St. John's Gospel proved to be a piece of the living Bread—the Bread of Life."

The Sadhu tells several similar stories of cases

where the New Testament has penetrated and produced conversions among those whom no missionary has been able to reach. Naturally Christianity so reached may sometimes include eccentric elements. "In one Buddhist temple in Western Tibet, when I went to see the library of the Lama, the Buddhist priest, I was surprised to see a copy of the New Testament there, and I asked him, 'Where did you get it?' He said, 'It is a wonderful book. There are many wonderful things in this book. Do you know who is that Jesus Christ in the Bible? He must have been an incarnation of Buddha.' I said, 'I believe in Him. He is my Saviour and the Saviour of the world.' The priest replied, 'I do not know whether He is the Saviour of the world; but I know that He is an incarnation of Buddha, and Tibet is the roof of the world, and He is coming again and His throne will be in Tibet, and He will rule over all the world because it is the roof of the world. So we are expecting Him and He will come back again, and He will reign in this world, the incarnation of Buddha, Jesus Christ."

Of the real aim and significance of the modern critical approach to the Bible the Sadhu has probably little or no first-hand knowledge; but by what he does know about it he is strongly repelled. He is indeed seriously concerned about "this

spiritual influenza," as he calls it, and about the disposition to regard our Lord merely as a great moral teacher, which he believes to be its result.

Coming from such a man the protest demands consideration. There are Scholars who do need reminding that Prophets, Psalmists and Apostles were—like the Sadhu—men who lived in, with and for God. Some of them saw the light less clearly than others, but all were mystics of the only true type—that is, men who know God, because they have loved God and striven to do His will. *Amans ab amante accenditur*, says St. Augustine, "lover is set afire by lover." He who approaches their writings in something of the spirit in which he would approach the Sacrament may himself catch fire; he too may find God. And he *should* be the better able to do this if he has enough knowledge of the history, outlook and surroundings of the writers to bring to his reading the imaginative insight which is needed for the full understanding and appreciation of all great literature. The critical study of the Bible is far the most important branch of Sacred Archæology and of Church History—but it is archæology and history, and no more. Once let the microscopic study of documents and dates become an obsession, blinding one to the weightier matters of the law, and a "spiritual influenza"

does indeed result. "These ought ye to have done and not to leave the other undone."

But the Sadhu's own view of inspiration, from the standpoint of which he criticises critics, is by no means the rigid mechanical theory which some Western theologians of the older school have upheld. It demands no verbal infallibility.

"When I was staying in North India in the house of a friend, I was reading a religious book in which were some things I did not understand. My host, a D.D. and a Ph.D., explained my difficulties, and his explanation sounded to me quite satisfactory. Later on, however, I met the author, who explained to me his real meaning, which was very different. Just so, learned men very often misinterpret the Scripture. If we want to know the real meaning we must go to the Author, that is to say, we must live with the Holy Spirit.

"The Holy Spirit is the true Author of the Scriptures, but I do not therefore say that every word, as it is written in the Hebrew or the Greek, is inspired. Just as my clothes are not myself, so words are only human language. It is not the words, but the inward meaning that is inspired. The language used by the authors of the Bible was the same language as that of ordinary life, and therefore was not really adequate for spiritual things. Hence our difficulty in getting back

through the words to the real meaning, but to those who are in contact with the author, that is with the Holy Spirit, everything is plain. ‘ My words are spirit, and they are life,’ but it was of the meaning, not the letter, that this was spoken. When the Holy Spirit speaks to men He does not speak in human words, but in that language of the heart, that direct wordless speech of the spiritual world, which I hear in Ecstasy.

“ When I am in Ecstasy and speak to the Angels and Saints, it is not in the language of this world, but in a spiritual language without words which seems to come quite naturally. Before I utter a word or move my lips the meaning is out ; and this is the same language in which truth was communicated to the authors of the Scripture. Afterwards they tried to find words to express what had been revealed to them. But often they may have failed to get just the right word, but the meaning they were trying to express is inspired. They must have felt acutely this difficulty in expressing the full meaning of what often cannot be really put into words ; and after they had written it down, having done their best, they must have thought to themselves, ‘ After all, something is better than nothing, and we *must* give our message.’

Speaking of the Bible on another occasion he said, “ We take food. The valuable part of our

food is digested and the useless part goes away in filth. The soul will assimilate naturally the elements which are good for itself: the rest will go away of themselves."

Of the part played by the Bible in his own conversion, he speaks thus:[1]

"I used to read the Bible, and I felt the power of the Word of God. Of course, I did not like it sometimes. I used to criticise it, and I used to tear up the Bible and burn it in the fire. But even then I must confess that sometimes I felt its wonderful power and attraction. It was a sort of fresh cool breeze—perhaps that illustration will not appeal to *you*—*you* prefer fire more than a breeze; but to those who are living in hot countries the cool breeze is refreshing—the breath of life. As a seeker after truth I tried first to be satisfied, to find peace and joy, from Hinduism or wherever I could find it. But the scriptures of Hinduism, the good teaching of other religions, could not satisfy me. When I used to read the Word of God, I felt that it was a refreshing cool breeze, the breath of life. Although I used to tear it up, I felt its power. Many others felt the power of the Word of God. They used to say, 'You must not read

[1] This, and the stories, pp. 197-9, are from an address at the Annual Meeting of the Bible Society in London. Cf. *The Bible in the World*, June 1920.

the Bible.' 'Why?' 'Because of its magic. You will become a Christian. Many who began by reading the Bible have become Christians. You must not read it.' Some of those who were non-Christians and who were opposed to Christianity realised that there was power in it. I used to feel in those days the wonderful power and attraction of the Word of God. I came to know my Saviour. Through the Word of God I was introduced to my Saviour. I knew Jesus Christ through the Bible. When He revealed Himself to me in a vision I became converted and I felt heaven on earth."

The last three sentences sum up his whole position. In his view of the Bible, as in everything else, he is the mystic whose mysticism centres on Christ. Or, as he himself puts it, "The purpose of the Gospels is merely to introduce us to Christ."

Miracles

The Sadhu believes implicitly in miracle. "The day of miracles is not gone, the day of faith is." And he regards—whether justly or otherwise, we need not here consider—those who hesitate to accept the miracles of the Bible as holding a diminished conception of the power of God. "Formerly the Bible used to be a large

book. Now it is printed in such a way that men carry it in their right pocket. So formerly God used to be thought of in a large way. Now men are trying to make God small and to carry Him in their left-hand pocket." "The miracle of the new birth is the greatest of all miracles. He who believes in that miracle believes in all miracles."

"The Saints in Heaven, though they help men spiritually on earth, are not allowed to come down and work directly, but only indirectly, through other men. The angels could easily convert the world in ten minutes. Some of them have asked for the privilege of being allowed to suffer in this world, but God refused their request, because He did not wish to interfere with men's freedom by such an exercise of miraculous power. The Apostles were allowed to work miracles in order to prove that they as well as Christ had authority behind their word, and miracles are still occasionally allowed but not often." [1]

In London or New York everything that strikes the eye speaks of organisation, invention and the science that has made all this possible. Nature appears to have been all but tamed by man, and the conception of the Reign of Law appeals to the imagination as well as to the reason—and it is hard to believe in miracles.

[1] This, the Sadhu said, was told him once when in Ecstasy. Cf. 110.

In an Indian village, upon mountains like the Himalayas, by rivers like the Ganges, where the luxuriance of tropical forest alternates with the vast expanse of endless plough-land or of desert plain, haunted by the scorch of the sun by day and the jungle's multitudinous hum by night, man, cowed and defenceless, senses the One behind it all as palpitating with mysterious and wholly incalculable Power. Add to this an ancient culture, exuberant in tales of marvel, entirely lacking in the scientific spirit—and it is difficult to disbelieve in miracle.

To take up one side or the other in such a controversy, or even to argue at length that the issue is one which really matters very little to the religious man, would be inappropriate in this place. Our purpose is to portray the Sadhu as he is ; but, if the portrait is to be a true one, the background it stands out against must be seen to be his environment, not ours.

The Sadhu believes in miracles, not merely because he finds them in the Bible, and in the Book of Nature as it reads most naturally to rural India's eyes, but because they have happened, or have seemed to happen, to himself.

The following is taken from the shorthand report of the address given to the meeting presided over by the Bishop of London, mentioned above (cf. p. 21). The experience described is

his own, and in India he has often told it as such. But he had sufficient knowledge of the English point of view to be aware that if he told it as a personal experience he would focus attention on himself and distract it from the moral he was enforcing, so he characteristically told it as if it had occurred to some other person.

" There was a man whom God had called in the mountains. At first the people did not want to receive him. In the beginning it was rather difficult for him. He was tired and hungry and thirsty. He went into a cave and began to pray and was tempted : ' You came to tell the people about Jesus Christ,' the tempter said, ' but where is Christ now ? You are hungry and thirsty and your Saviour does not help you.' But when he began to pray he found a wonderful Peace, and he could say, ' My Saviour has heard.' He could not get food or bread, but he took some sweet leaves, and it was as though he had never tasted such luscious food before. The presence of our Saviour had changed them.

" Afterwards a crowd of people came with sticks and stones in their hands to attack him. He closed his eyes and said, ' Thy will be done. I commit my soul into Thy hands.' But, when he opened his eyes, he saw that they had gone. He spent the whole night praying, and in the morning eighty or ninety people came in a crowd

to see him, but not with sticks or stones in their hands.

" ' If you want to kill me here I am,' the man said.

" ' Last night we came to kill you and stone you, but to-day we have come to ask one question. We have seen many people from different countries and know them all, but last night we saw some wonderful people : to which country do they belong ? You were not alone last night, so many people were standing around you in shining robes, who were they ? '

" Not one or two saw this vision, but the whole crowd. Those men in the shining robes belonged to heaven. They are sent to work for those who bear witness for Him and obey Him. But those who live a life of prayer shall see much more wonderful things than that. They will find that Peace which they can find nowhere else."

The Tamil addresses contain this story :

" In Tibet there was a man who sought God, but not finding Him was restless and unhappy. Finally he became so dejected that he resolved to commit suicide. At that time a stranger came to him, and said, ' I know a man a hundred miles away, living outside this kingdom, who can help you.' The man gladly agreed to see him. After several days' travel they both

reached the bank of a river. 'Stay here,' said he stranger. 'Seven miles away is the village where the man of whom I spoke lives. I will go and bring him back here.' With these words he crossed over to the other side of the river and went to the village, and brought back with him that Christian. The Christian and the other man talked for a long time, and the latter believed in Christ and was ready to be baptized. He looked for the stranger who helped him by bringing him all this way, but could not find him anywhere. He thought that he was the Christian's friend, and the Christian thought that he was the friend of the man from Tibet. Finally they decided that he was an angel. And the man was baptized. But though the angel spent several days with him he did not preach to him. It was God's will that this part of the task should be done by a man, the Christian who lived a hundred miles away."

The following excerpt from a letter to the *Nur Afshan*,[1] illustrating as it does both the Sadhu's way of life and the atmosphere in which he moves, will appropriately end this chapter:

"A few weeks ago a Christian Sadhu by name Sundar Singh came about preaching the Gospel in the villages round about Narkanda and suffered a great deal of persecution. We were sitting

[1] Quoted by A. Zahir, *A Lover of the Cross*, p. 11.

and chatting . . . when a farmer by name Nandi came up and said :

" ' A very strange thing has happened in our village. One day while we were reaping the corn in a field a Sadhu came up to us and began to preach religion. We all felt very annoyed at this interference in our work and showered curses on him ; but little heeding our curses and threats the man went on with his talk. At this my brother took up a stone and hit the man on the head. But this good man, unmindful of the insult, closed his eyes and said, "O God, forgive them !" After a while my brother who had flung the stone was suddenly caught with a splitting headache and had to give up reaping. At this the Sadhu took my brother's scythe and started reaping the corn. We all marvelled and said, "What manner of man is this Sadhu, that, instead of abusing and cursing us in return, he prays in our favour." Then we took him to our house, where he told us many nice things. After he had gone we noticed an amazing thing. The field where this good man had reaped has never yielded so much corn as it has this year ; we have gathered two maunds above the average this time.' . . .

" A few days ago I met a European lady on her way to Simla. I told her about this matter, and she advised me to send an account of this marvellous incident to the *Nur Afshan*. . . .

Hence according to her advice I send this communication to the Editor . . . and request the Sadhuji himself to visit that same village again, so that we may benefit by his holy preaching. . . .

(Signed) JIYA RAM."

IX

TABLE TALK

In form and matter there is not very much difference between what the Sadhu says on the platform and when talking to one or two individuals in private or to the company gathered at a meal. But he is obviously more at home discoursing in the informal, somewhat rambling style of the Indian Guru amid his disciples than in the set sermon or platform address of the West. Moreover in small gatherings it is easier to appreciate his humour, his kindliness, his spiritual insight, to see the vivacity and changing expression of his face, and to feel the atmosphere of divine peace which he diffuses round him.

In this chapter we collect, under a convenient title, specimens of his discourse, public and private—chosen, sometimes for their penetrating insight, and sometimes for their picturesque simplicity.

The Preacher

"I don't sit down and write out my sermons. As I pray, I get texts, subjects and illustrations.

Preachers ought to get their message from God. If they get it from books instead, they do not preach their own gospel; they preach the gospel of others. They sit on other people's eggs and hatch them and think they are their own."

Once a reporter from a London newspaper asked him on what subject he was going to speak at a certain meeting. He said that he himself did not know, but that he would speak as led by the Lord. He always, however, insists on a prolonged period for prayer and meditation before giving a public address: and he starts with a text and a few leading thoughts carefully chosen in view of the particular occasion. The actual development of the sermon depends a great deal upon the nature of the audience. "There is something or other in me which enables me to recognise instinctively the spiritual need of the audience, just as a dog instinctively traces out a scent more effectively than a learned man."

Apropos of his method of preparing sermons we remarked: "What about minds that are not fertile? If they go into the pulpit as you do, without very carefully working out their sermons, they cannot hold the attention of the people." Said the Sadhu: "Only men called of God should enter His service as preachers. To these, though of poor intellect, God will give a message."

" There was once a sweeper who became a Christian. He gave his heart to Christ. He found that Peace in Him, and was saved, and so could bear witness for Him. People would say, ' There is something in him that we have not got.' In his preaching he was listened to with great attention. A passer-by asked, ' Why are they listening so respectfully to a sweeper ? ' The sweeper said, ' When my Saviour was going to Jerusalem riding on an ass, the people brought clothes and spread them under his feet. They did not spread their clothes under the feet of Christ but under the feet of the ass. Why do that for an ass ? Because the King of Kings was riding on that ass. When the Christ got down from that ass, nobody cared about it. That ass was honoured so long as the King of Kings was riding on it.' "

" Have you any advice to give about the training of theological students ? " " There should be more practical work. The professors themselves should go about the country for two or three months with their students to preach the Gospel."

Life and Hope

" Life and life abundant are not the same. There is a great difference between them. What is the use of mere life ? Let me give you an

illustration. I went to a hospital and saw a man laid up with illness. He was not in a dangerous condition, and yet I heard the next day that he had died. How did he die? That night a cobra fell on his bed from the roof. He saw it coming from near his feet towards where his head lay, and was filled with fright. But he had not the strength either to leave the bed or to kill the snake. It bit him on the neck and he died. Then another man came and killed the snake. The man who died had life, and yet what a difference! Though the one had life, he could not protect himself from danger, while the other protected himself and killed the snake. Many Christians also have life, but they are unable to protect themselves from the old serpent. They cannot overcome temptation. How can they save others? They will die in sin because the old serpent bites them and the poison spreads all over the body. But those who have the life abundant will kill the old serpent, and besides conquering temptation themselves will help others to do the same. This is life abundant."

"If we can give ourselves to Him, then He can work through us. If we put ourselves in His hands, then He can use us. Through those who are men of prayer He can do great things."

"The servants of God are sometimes dis-

heartened. The people do not care, they do not listen. Sometimes I have been myself disheartened. But I have learned that our part is to preach and bear witness. If we do this, then the Holy Spirit will work in their hearts. But we must do our part."

"Let us never be discouraged by our weaknesses. The Sun has many spots. On that account does it cease to give light? So let us shine with the light which He, the True Light, gives us. He will remove our defects and make us perfect. Our duty is to shine. The fire-fly is one of the smallest of insects; yet it gladdens the heart of the traveller with its tiny light."

Service

"There was a rich man in a certain place. One day his son was sitting in his father's garden. At that time many birds came and ate up the fruits. Cattle trampled on the plants. The son saw, but did not drive them away. 'Is it right for you to see your father's garden destroyed in this way and keep quiet? Can you not drive these things out?' said the people to him. 'My father has not asked me to do so,' said the son. 'So that is not my work.' Then the father, hearing of what happened, drove his son out of the house. For it is not a special

voice, but the needs and imperfections of those around us which constitute a call for God's service."

"In the mountainous regions of North India, where it is very cold, travellers are in the habit of keeping warm in this way. They take a small vessel, put burning coal in it and cover it up. They weave strings around it and, wrapping it with cloth, carry it under their arms. Three men were travelling thus towards the sacred place known as Amarnath. One of them saw several others suffering with cold, and, taking the fire out of his vessel, lit a fire so that every one could get warm. So every one left the place alive. When they had all to walk in the dark, the second man of the party took out the fire in his vessel and lit a torch with it, and helped them all to walk along in safety. The third man of the party mocked them and said: 'You are fools. You have wasted your fire for the sake of others.' 'Show us your fire,' said they to him. When he broke open his vessel there was no fire, but only ashes and coal. With his fire one had given warmth to others, and another had given light. But the third man was selfish and kept the fire to himself, and it was of no use even to him.

"In the same way, it is God's will that the fire of the Holy Spirit which we receive should give warmth and light to others and help them to be

saved. Many people despise those who spend their health, strength and money for the salvation of others, and call them mad. And yet it is they who will save many and who will be saved themselves. But those who are not anxious that others should share in the salvation they have received would lose their own salvation and find their way to hell on the last day. There is no use in their lamenting then. So we should try to save others even now."

"There was a king reigning over the Kingdom of Paras. He saw that his subjects were very lazy, and was troubled in his mind as to how they would fight when enemies invaded the land. Seeing that it was of no use to give them advice, he rolled a big stone where four roads met. Though the people saw this they did not attempt to remove the stone, but walked their own way. A week went by. Then the king ordered all his subjects to come together at that place. Then he lifted without any difficulty the stone, which was light as it was hollowed out. Under it was a bag filled with golden ornaments worth a lakh. On the bag were the words : 'This is for him who lifts the stone.' The king showed them this and said : 'You lost this by your laziness. If you continue in this way you will lose this kingdom when enemies come.' Every one who was there was sorry for having lost the oppor-

tunity of becoming enormously rich by having been afraid of trouble and labour.

" Christ likewise calls us to bear the cross and to endure suffering and sorrow for the salvation of others. Many go away unwilling to bear the cross, as they like to have wealth, health and influence. They think that the cross is heavy. But He says : ' My yoke is easy and my burden is light.' When we carry it, we shall find that it is light. Moreover, when we lift the cross, we shall see below it throne and crown and glory. Here is the cross, but there is glory. So we must be prepared to spend our health, our strength, and, if need be, our lives, for the salvation of our countrymen."

" There was a devout Christian who obeyed God's call and worked in God's vineyard. The people beat and ill-treated him, and hung him on a tree, upside down. But he said : ' I am not surprised that you hang me upside down. The world is upside down, and so the deeds of the world are also upside down. So you have hung me also upside down. For this I thank you. Magic lantern slides are placed upside down, and then they are seen right side up on the screen. If they are right side up in the lantern they would come out upside down on the screen. Here you have tied me upside down, but I shall be right side up in the heavenly

home. If I were right side up here, I should probably be upside down there.'"

Religion

"Are not all religions much alike, they all teach good actions?" "Yes, but there is a great difference. Other religions say: Do all the good deeds you can, and you will at last become good.[1] Christianity says: Be good, and then you can do good—it will come naturally from a good heart. The change of heart must come first."

"What," we asked, "do you think of the Buddha and his message?" "He is not a mystic, but only a moral teacher. For there is nothing in his teaching about God. In such a man this is rather surprising. He preached Nirvana or the extinction of desire. But salvation is not the extinction of desire. It is the satisfaction of desire. The proper way to deal with thirst is not to kill it—which would mean death—but to satisfy it."

"Suppose we write one and place a number of ciphers on its right-hand side. The more the ciphers the larger is the figure. But any number of ciphers on its left-hand side are mere ciphers. Christ stands for number one. On His left hand

[1] The same thought, but with a difference, occurs on p. 61.

is the world. The riches which those who seek the world acquire are mere ciphers. But on His right hand is Heaven. The riches acquired by those who seek this are limitless."

"Sects are strange unnecessary things. There is one God, why have so many churches? Why cause dissension? But, I suppose, this is the world. When all sects are one it will be the world no longer. It will be Heaven then."

"One day I was passing through a street. I saw all the doors locked up. There was nobody to be seen. At once it occurred to me that so long as the heart is locked up against the Lord who made the heart, it is necessary to lock up all the doors in order to save property. But if the heart is opened to the Lord, then there will be no need to lock up the doors, because there will be no thieves."

Providence

"I saw a young man and asked him what work he was doing for his Saviour. 'What has He done for me that I must do something for Him?' he said. 'Has He not shed His blood, given His Life for you?' I said. 'Stay,' said he, 'was that only for me? He gave His Life for all. What has He done for me in particular that I should serve Him?' After some months

he became seriously ill and was on his death-bed. Then he was in the spirit and saw a vision. His room was covered with pictures portraying different events in his life. In one he is seen falling down as a child from a balcony upstairs. As he is falling down, a Man receives him in His arms and lets him down gently ; on His hands are the scars of nails. In another picture he slips from a rock and thinks he would certainly die. Then, too, a Man rescued him. On His hands he sees scars. In another picture he steps on a snake, but One holds the snake so that it does not bite him. On His hands are also scars. Then when in the privacy of a room he is sinning, He appears before him and, showing him His wounds, pleads with him not to sin. As he saw all these pictures, He came and stood near him and said : 'Though I have done all this for you, you thought that I had not done anything for you. You are going to die now. If you die you are sure to enter eternal hell. But this time also I shall save you from death. Go and proclaim to every one the great things which the Lord has done for you.' So when he got well he became a servant of God. When I saw him again he told me, with great anguish : 'In my ignorance I thought that God had done nothing for me. When on different occasions I escaped calamities, my parents and I thought

that they were due either to good luck or chance. But now I know that it is the Saviour who has promised to be with us to the end of the world who is with me every day of my life and protects me from all dangers.' "

The Hereafter

" To the chick in the shell, its eyes and wings are sufficient evidence of a world beyond. The eye is for sight, but what can it see within the shell? The wings are for flight, but how can it fly within the shell? It is therefore clear that the eyes and the wings are not for the life within the shell, but for the life outside the shell. In the same way there are many good desires and ambitions which cannot be fulfilled here. There must be an opportunity for their fulfilment. That is in Eternity.

" Certain conditions must be observed if we are to enjoy hereafter the bliss of Heaven and not the punishment of Hell. The mother's warmth is necessary for the chicken to come out alive, or the egg would become rotten and be thrown away. As it is necessary for the chick to receive warmth, even while in the shell, it is necessary for us to receive the warmth of the Holy Spirit to live even while on this earth. Just as the chick comes out, we shall also leave

this world and, entering the kingdom of heaven, enjoy eternal bliss.

"Many discuss the Hereafter and say that after death we shall become nothing, and that it is idle to talk about Heaven and Hell. This reminds one of a conversation said to have taken place between a hen and her unhatched chicken. The hen spoke to a chick, and said, 'Little one, in a minute or two you will leave this shell. Then you will see me, your mother. You will also see the world around you filled with beautiful flowers and trees.' But the chick obstinately maintained that all that talk about mother and the world was a lie. But soon the shell broke and the chick came out. It saw its mother and the world around, and knew that its mother's words were all true. So those who say that there is no Heaven or Hell will find out the truth when the shell of their body breaks and their soul comes out.

"When you go to a strange country it is good to have a friend who will be kind to you. Become friends with Jesus Christ; then in Heaven you will have a friend."

X

AN INDIAN CHRISTIANITY

Christianity and National Genius

In Europe Christianity has become differentiated into three main types, Latin, Greek and Teutonic—the last being further differentiated into many sub-types. These correspond to the genius and temperament of the peoples predominant in different areas. It is to be expected that, at no distant date, at least three more types will emerge—an Indian, a Chinese and a Japanese. But in Europe the differentiation of racial and national types of Christianity—a thing in itself inevitable and up to a point desirable—has come about in a way which has been wholly disastrous. This no doubt has been mainly due to the fact that religious questions have been complicated with political; but the result has been that what was meant to be the religion of mankind as such, a bond of unity and peace transcending all divisions of race and class and culture, has in practice

tended rather to enhance the bitterness of existing feuds. Energies, which properly applied might have regenerated the world, have been dissipated in internecine struggle. Perhaps the greatest problem before the rapidly maturing churches of the East is how to achieve a truly national expression of Christianity while avoiding mistakes, which, while not exactly the same, may well be as calamitous as those which have paralysed the Christianity of Europe.

Baron von Hügel, at his interview with the Sadhu, was particularly impressed by his views on this problem. In the memorandum which he wrote for us, he very penetratingly sums up the Sadhu's attitude. "The Sadhu most rightly does not, by a specifically Indian Christianity, mean a Christianity so much adapted to Indian thought as to cease to be a living Christianity. Thus his reaction, *e.g.* against Brahman teaching and method, is assuredly not chargeable with insufficiency. Indeed the Sadhu's entire general outlook, in all its positive features, does not, in its grandly non-pantheistic, its personalist and historical connexions, simply echo or take over *en bloc*, any of the strains actually predominant in Indian philosophy and religion. He no more, because he is an Indian, takes over wholesale the extant, directly manifest peculiarities of Indian thought than did St. Paul, because he

was a Jew, take over wholesale the extant, directly manifest peculiarities of Jewish thought, or than St. Augustine, because he was an African Roman, took over wholesale the extant, readily seizable, special features of the African Roman mind. Yet both St. Paul and St. Augustine were proud of being respectively Jew and Roman, and were anxious to remain as Jewish and Roman as deep Christianity allowed. So also the Sadhu is most rightly proud of being an Indian, and is anxious to remain as Indian as deep Christianity allows."

In our view, this exactly expresses the Sadhu's position.

"Once when I was travelling in Rajputana," said the Sadhu, "there was a Brahman of high caste hurrying to the station. Overcome by the great heat, he fell down on the platform. The Anglo-Indian station-master was anxious to help him. He brought him some water in a white cup, but he would not take the water. He was so thirsty, but he said, 'I cannot drink that water. I would prefer to die.' 'We are not asking you to eat this cup,' they said to him. 'I will not break my caste,' he said, 'I am willing to die.' But when water was brought to him in his own brass vessel he drank it eagerly. When it was brought to him in his own way he did not object. It is the same with the Water of

Life. Indians do need the Water of Life, but not in the European cup."

The Sadhu's own method of teaching is characteristically Indian. A sage frequently, a popular teacher always, speaks in pictures and argues in pictures. Often he also thinks in pictures ; and Sundar, coming as he does in the line of Indian seers and poets, follows the same method. This is even more noticeable in his ordinary talk than in his public addresses. The illustrations he uses in these latter might conceivably be the result of careful thought, but as one listens to him in private, one perceives that it is in and by vivid pictures that his own mind works ; and often remarks thrown off on the spur of the moment are masterpieces of imagination and expression.

This, however, it might be said, is not so much Indian as Eastern ; yet, among Easterns, who but an Indian would have been so enraptured by St. John's philosophy of Logos, Life and Love, and have then translated it into vivid parable ?

Specifically Indian, too, is the instinct which led the Sadhu in search of saints brooding in inaccessible spots on the Himalayas over God and Eternity, and which determined the intense interest he took in the venerable Maharishi, whom he found on Kailash—a name hallowed in Hindu Literature by endless sacred associations.

Both the hermit, who seeks the absolute solitude of forest, mountain-cave or desert to meditate alone, and the monk, to whom the life of communion with the Divine seems easier in a community of kindred souls, are to be found in East and West alike. But while corporate devotion—the Catholic Mass, the Evangelical prayer-meeting, the Quaker silence—is characteristic of the West, India has been the hermit's classic land. It is the Indian in the Sadhu that longs to live the life of such solitary contemplation did not the love of Christ constrain him to choose rather work for the salvation of his fellow-men.

One who is himself so completely Indian naturally desires a completely Indian Church.

"What will the future church of India be," he was asked, "Church of England, Wesleyan, Baptist, or what?" "There will be only an Indian Church," he replied, "a Church constituted according to Indian methods and ideals." He does not think the Indian Church can yet stand alone. Missionaries are still required to train Indian Christian leaders; but these must gradually be given more and more responsibility. "When a person wants to learn to swim he must first of all learn how he should swim on land. But he must then get into the water, first in the shallow, afterwards in the deep. So carefully trained Indian leaders must first be placed in

places of moderate responsibility where they can learn, then by and by they will be able to make their churches strong and we may expect great things. In some places they have already begun to do that."

He enforces this estimate both of the strength and weakness of the Indian Church by a parable, probably suggested by the popular picture of "Mother India," painted on the map with her head crowned by the Himalayas and her feet upon the lotus of Ceylon.

"We can compare India to a man. The Himalayas are his head, South India is his feet, Punjab his right hand and Bengal his left. If this man is to stand firm he has to stand on South India, his feet. South India is indeed fit for this. The Christians of South India are very advanced, in numbers as well as in education.[1] But, though many of these churches are self-supporting, and though this man can stand on these feet, he is unable to walk now. What is the reason? I saw a Jew in the state of Cochin. He stood, but could not walk. Why? Because he had elephantiasis which made his legs swollen and heavy. The Indian Church is unable to proclaim the Gospel all over India and to save

[1] English readers may be reminded that there are churches in Travancore and Cochin which claim to have been founded by the Apostle Thomas, and which in any case probably date back at least as early as the second century A.D.

the whole country because of the elephantiasis of the Indian Church of the south. Caste distinction is its main weakness. Through this and other causes there is lack of love, and therefore lack of anxiety to save others. If this disease is healed the Church of South India will be used as an instrument, and guide the other churches of India."

By adopting the life of a sadhu, Sundar is deliberately attempting to Indianise Christianity. And his attempt, as we shall indicate later, may raise issues more fundamental than he has probably foreseen. But in other respects the Indianisation of Christianity he has in mind is mainly a matter of externals. To a friend who once asked him how Christianity could be nationalised in India, he replied : "The people should sit down on the floor in church. They should take off their shoes instead of their turbans. Indian music should be sung. Long, informal addresses should take the place of sermons." So far as fundamentals are concerned, Christianity to the Sadhu is supra-national. It is the religion neither of the East nor of the West, but of Humanity.

Just as Christ said of the Jewish Law and Prophets, that He came not to destroy but to fulfil, so, as the Sadhu sees it, is His religion related to the nobler elements in Hinduism.

"Christianity is the fulfilment of Hinduism. Hinduism has been digging channels. Christ is the water to flow through these channels. The Bhagavad Gita is very much like St. John's Gospel. It is probable, as one of my friends suggested, that a Hindu took St. John's thoughts and put them into Hindu form.[1] The Bhagavad Gita was composed in the second century A.D., and at that time there were Christians in India. Heat from the sun is stored up in the earth. It comes out when stone comes into friction with stone. Non-Christian thinkers also have received light from the Sun of Righteousness. The Hindus have received of the Holy Spirit. There are many beautiful things in Hinduism, but the fullest light is from Christ. Every one is breathing air. So every one, Christian as well as non-Christian, is breathing the Holy Spirit, though they do not call it by that name. The Holy Spirit is not the private property of some special people."

Why then, it will be asked, does the Sadhu so often seem to go out of his way to assert that he himself gained but little from the study of the Hindu sacred books, and nothing at all from

[1] Few students of Indian literature would agree that this was probable. But even if not true of the historical, the remark well illustrates the philosophical and religious relationship which the Sadhu conceives to exist between what he regards as the mountain-tops of Hindu and Christian inspiration.

the characteristically Hindu religious practice of Yoga?

Converts are proverbially inclined to be the severest critics of their old faith. Naturally—a man does not at a great cost to himself exchange one religion for another unless he feels intensely the strong points of the new and the weak points of the old. Some Indian converts — Pandita Ramabai is a notable instance—can see nothing in Hinduism but a "power of darkness."[1] But this does not explain the Sadhu's attitude. The darker side of Hinduism he never alludes to, at least we can quote no such allusion. He rarely if ever denounces the grosser abuses of the popular religion. His criticisms of Hinduism appear to be mainly directed, not against its weak, but against its strong points—its philosophic Pantheism, the doctrine of Karma, the Path of Knowledge (Jnana-marga),[2] the practice of Yoga, the Ascetic ideal.

The real answer to our question must be sought elsewhere. The Sadhu, as we have again and again reiterated, is a mystic whose mysticism centres on Christ, he is one who has fallen in love—though that or any metaphor is far too feeble—with Christ. And, compared with the light of the knowledge and love of Christ by

[1] Cf. *International Review of Missions*, April 1920, p. 223.

[2] Cf. p. 182.

which he himself now walks, the highest illumination known to Hindu Saints seems to him as a twilight glimmer to the noonday sun. What they possessed no doubt was good. But now a far better thing is offered. And to choose the merely good when one may have the best is definitely to take the lower path.

Philosophic Pantheism

Hinduism, on its philosophical side, is far too imposing a structure to be demolished merely by telling epigrams and happily conceived illustrations. And any one who goes to the Sadhu's utterances for a reasoned intellectual criticism either of Pantheism or of doctrines like Karma or Jnana, which have been previously touched on, will be disappointed. The Sadhu emphatically is not a philosopher. He himself would be the first to disclaim any pretence of being one. His mind is rather that of the prophet—a type closer akin to the poet than to the philosopher. Just as the artist is the man who can see beauty where others miss it, and then show it to the world, so the prophet is one who has the eye for moral and religious values and the power vividly to present them to mankind. The intuitive perception of value, whether æsthetic or ethical, is different from the purely

intellectual discernment of logical cogency, which is a mark of the philosopher, or from the capacity to apprehend the laws which co-ordinate the results of observation, which characterises the scientist. The Sadhu's criticisms of Hinduism are of importance, not as intellectual arguments, but as indications of just how and where his "prophetic" temper "senses" a deficiency in the matter of these values.

The fundamental assertion of Religion is that Reality is in the last resort good; and that, therefore, if we search long enough, we shall discover that the best is also the most true. But untutored man is no better judge of what is best than of what is most beautiful; moral insight is as rare as good taste. It is the special function of the prophet to help men to see more clearly what really is the best. The philosopher is required to prove that it is also true. But the philosopher can do this only if in *his* search the question he puts first is, not what is best, but what is most true. Accordingly it is very difficult for the same man to be both prophet and philosopher. The Sadhu conspicuously is not both. But surely in India, the land of philosophy, it will not be long before the Christian Church can produce a philosopher to match her prophet.

The Sadhu's frequent criticisms of Pantheism

are largely a reaction against his Indian environment. It would not be true to say that all Hindus are Pantheists—Ramanuja, for instance, whose philosophy has provided an intellectual basis for Bhakti[1] worship, is the notable exception. Still, in India, a Pantheism based mainly on the Monism of the great Sankara is the dominant philosophy of religion. The Christian mystics of the West, where popular religion has tended to emphasise only the Divine Transcendence, are usually to be found insisting on the aspect of Immanence. In an opposite environment, the Sadhu emphasises the opposite aspect of the truth. But that element in Pantheism which constitutes its specifically religious value—its insistence on the closeness and intimacy and the inward character of the relationship of the soul to the Divine—is of the essence of his message.

" Muhammadan and Hindu mystics have mistakenly sought an absorption into the Great Spirit like the sinking of the river in the ocean. The ideal is to be in, but not to lose yourself in, the Great Spirit." Again : " Hindus commonly

[1] *Bhakti* means " loving devotion," that being the attitude to the Divine inculcated by the poets and thinkers who founded the religious movement so named. They flourished in different parts of India from the Middle Ages onward, and mainly wrote in the languages of the people. One of the best known is Kabir, familiar to English readers in the translation of Rabindranath Tagore. Cf. Art. " Bhakti Marga," in *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics.*

like St. John's Gospel ; I in You and You in Me appeals to them. But they are apt to be confused by their Pantheism. Christ's oneness with the Father and His oneness with ourselves is different. Light is Sun, and Sun is Light. Heat is Sun, and Sun is Heat. But you cannot say Heat is Light. Christ is the Light of the World. The Holy Spirit is the Heat of the World. Christ is not the Holy Spirit. Pantheism which blurs a distinction between me and God loses the main point. If I am to enjoy God, I must be different from God. The tongue could not enjoy sweetmeats if there were no difference between it and them."

"If we are God," he once said, "there is no need for worship. Pantheism has no sense of sin, and so there is a tendency to immoral lives."

Baron von Hügel remarked to him : "I am surprised that you are so free from Pantheism."

"In the early stages of my Christian career," said the Sadhu, "I had some leanings towards Pantheism myself. I used to think that the wonderful peace I had was probably the result of my being God or a part of God.[1] But two arguments have removed this doubt : the first, that while practising Yoga I did not have that peace ; the second, that occasionally I feel gloom

[1] This is held to be literally true of a Hindu sannyasi, cf. p. 255.

and depression from the consciousness of God abandoning me."

Yoga and Bhakti

The mystic tendency in India may be said, generally speaking, to have followed two main lines of development—that of Yoga and that of Bhakti. These are regarded sometimes as supplementary, sometimes as contrasted, methods to be followed in the quest for the Divine. There are many ways of Yoga and there are several sects of Bhakti — and these differ enormously in moral and spiritual value. There is a Yoga which, in principle, is not far removed from some of the contemplative devotions which the Catholic cloister has devised. There is a Yoga which is a mere trick of self-induced hypnosis, a trance-practice profitless and enervating to mind and heart and will. There are Bhakti sects which can justly claim a place among the higher religions of the world. There are others which countenance, some which even aim at, a religious exaltation which finds symbols of mystic union in rites of an immoral character.

But between Yoga and Bhakti, apart from these essential differences within the connotation of each word, there is a broad and general distinction—a distinction which, if for the sake

of a " bird's eye view " we are content to ignore subtler shades and differences, we may roughly express in a series of contrasts. The Yogin seeks the bliss of contact with the Absolute by rigour and self-discipline ; the Bhakta seeks it through the beauty of song, dance and hymn. The former tries to suppress his desires, the latter to express them. The watchword of the former is " concentration," mainly an intellectual effort ; the watchword of the latter is " devotion," largely an emotional "abandon." To the Yogin Peace is the goal of the mystic quest ; to the Bhakta, Joy. The former tries to satisfy man's craving for the changeless by penetrating ever deeper into the spiritual profound ; the latter is allured by exuberant vitality, expressed symbolically in movement and rhythm. The former is individualistic, preoccupied with solitary meditation ; the latter is social, deriving joy and inspiration from the company of kindred souls. The Yogin neglects the accompaniments of sacerdotal worship, and loves the seclusion of forest or cave ; the Bhakta makes full use of temple, idol, hymn. The former may adore Eternal Being whether personally or impersonally conceived ; the latter's rich and full devotion is directed towards a Rama or a Krishna, who represents the supreme Divinity in human form.

The Sadhu frequently asserts that he has been

influenced by neither the Yoga nor the Bhakti schools of thought, nor can it for one moment be maintained that the essential elements of his religion have been derived from outside the Christian tradition. An English reader, who had never heard of Yoga or of Bhakti, would say at once of the man who speaks in these pages that his outlook and experience have demonstrably been moulded by the New Testament—with perhaps here and there a touch of influence from St. Francis of Assisi and Thomas à Kempis—but that nothing else has counted.

And yet, and yet . . .

Yoga, or at least one of the ways of Yoga, as he constantly himself recalls, he tried as a boy, and persevered in trying—tried it and found it wanting. And the Yogin's passion for peace was the form in which he first felt that thirst of the soul for higher things which, it would seem, in all men is a prelude to the divine illumination. Though the Yogin's "peace" through "concentration"—the Sanskrit *Samādhi* is translated by either of those two words—is quite different from that joyous Peace of God of which the Sadhu speaks. Again, can we entirely disconnect with this early quest and practice the part played in his religious life by the fact of Ecstasy? The experience of Ecstasy is common with Western Mystics; but

in the frequency of its occurrence, in the supreme importance he attaches to it, and, it must be added, in the entire lack of that misgiving which made many of the Catholic mystics enquire carefully about each vision before they dare be sure that all of them were of God—the mysticism of the Sadhu has points of contact with the higher Yogic type. There is, however, one difference, and that absolutely fundamental, between the Sadhu's and the Yogic mysticism, namely, the intensification in his Ecstasy of the Christ-control of normal life.

There is no evidence that the Bhakti poets were among the Hindu books he specially studied as a boy ; though in the Bhagavad Gita, which he knew by heart, there are elements closely akin to Bhakti. It is noticeable also that he never uses the erotic imagery familiar to Bhakti—found too in many Christian—mystics to express the soul's intimacy with or longing for the Divine. Profounder calm rather than enhanced excitement accompanies his religious experience when most intense. In his advice to others he shows awareness of the dangers of emotion in religion. But there is a strain in him of the Bhakta's longing, though rigorously controlled. Once when the conversation turned on the Bhakti poets, and how they often say that in hours of spiritual exaltation their hair stands on end, tears flow

from their eyes, and their body thrills with rapture: "These," he said, "are only outward expression. Reality is beyond them. Usually my joy has taken an exceedingly quiet form. Sometimes it has shown itself in a different way. My hair has stood on end. Tears have run down my cheeks. But my body has never shivered with ecstasy. The peace and joy which I experience are contagious. Once I found others in my company shedding tears of joy as I did."

He sought, and he has found, the Yogin's Peace, the Bhakta's Joy as well—found them and more also, and more abundantly, in Christ. Who that has read this book so far can fail to see that Christianity, as the Sadhu feels and lives it, is not only the religion of the New Testament unadulterated and undefiled, but is also, in a sense no Westerner can ever apprehend, the consummation and the crown of Hinduism—the Way, which has as goal the synthesis and sublimation of both the Yogin's and the Bhakta's quest?

The Sadhu Ideal[1]

We come now to the most distinctively Indian element in the Sadhu's conception and presentation of Christianity. In the Middle Ages, especially in the Franciscan movement, something

[1] Cf. also the remarks on this subject, p. 11 f.

similar was attempted in the West. The practice and ideals of St. Francis of Assisi are in many respects identical with those of Sundar Singh, and possibly even may not have been without some influence upon him. Yet the incentive to carry out the ideal in this twentieth century is definitely traceable to the admiration instilled into him by his mother for Hindu sadhus whom he visited in her company as a boy, and for their way of living. "You must not," she used to say, "be careless and worldly like your brothers. You must seek peace of soul and love religion, and some day you must become a holy sadhu." "It was the Holy Ghost," he said once, "who made me a Christian, but it was my mother who made me a sadhu."

Unlike, however, the typical Hindu sadhu, Sundar Singh is definitely not an ascetic who attempts to accumulate merit or achieve perfection by self-inflicted suffering. He prefers to describe himself as a "preaching friar." Nor does he say that the world and everything connected with it is evil. On the other hand, he often gives expression to the conviction that because God is good the world He has made must be also good.

"I tell Hindu sadhus: 'You are sadhus because you want to torture yourself. I am a sadhu to serve. I do not torture myself, though

I have been tortured. I have not renounced the world. I want to be in the world and yet not of the world.'

" Once I passed through a village on the Himalayas and saw a huge pile of dirt and dung. The smell that issued from it was so bad that I vomited. After some days I passed the same place again. I noticed a sweet smell covering up the bad odour. I was surprised, and I wanted to find out what had caused the difference. Some flowers had come out and spread fragrance around. Heat and light from the sun had given beautiful colour and sweet smell to the flowers. The place was filthy, but the filth itself had become manure. So we are living in the dirt and filth of this world. But if, like the flowers, our hearts are open to the Sun of Righteousness, then, just like flowers, we shall receive from Him spiritual colour and fragrance, and the things of this world, like manure, will help us in our spiritual life.

" Sitting in a garden I have thought within myself thus : These flowers, fruits and so on have been created. They are not for God, nor for the angels, not for Satan, nor for the animals. They are for men. Then why should we renounce them ? "

The supreme practical test of the meaning of these general principles will appear when we

indicate his attitude towards Money and towards Marriage. But, in general, Sundar's motives for adopting the sadhu life are clear. He has done this because it gives him complete freedom, it releases him from the distractions of earthly business, it enables him to practise the virtue, so extolled in Indian books, of regarding in the same spirit fortune as well as misfortune; because, principally, it seems to him the best way to commend the Gospel to the multitudes of India; perhaps, too—though he never says this—because that life more than any other makes possible the literal imitation of the life of Jesus, and, finally, because he has the unanalysable but imperative conviction that he has been called by God to do so.

Money

He carries no money with him. How he manages in the West has already been described.[1] Once indeed on the advice of friends he did start to carry money, but he soon gave it up. "I don't like to put my trust in my pocket, but in God. There may be holes in pockets. There are also pickpockets. But we are safe if we trust in Him. We find in Him everything we desire." "If I were a rich man, my resources, however large, would be limited. But, as God is my loving Father, all the world is mine."

[1] Cf. p. 41.

In the earlier years of his life as a sadhu he often had to go without food, if no one invited him home for a meal, since he had no money with which to buy one. But now that his name is so well known this difficulty has largely disappeared. Indeed, sometimes when he has to go from one place to another, twenty-five people struggle to buy a ticket for him.

The wisdom of this practice of the Sadhu must be judged from the standpoint of Indian traditions. In the West it would not be possible for a man, however sincere, to live on alms without ultimately losing the respect of others, and probably in the long run his self-respect as well. Even if the experiment did succeed in the case of some exceptional individual, it would break down with his followers. The Franciscan ideal in its original form had ultimately to be practically abandoned, and it was more feasible in the Middle Ages than it would be now. The practice, however, of St. Paul, who supported himself while preaching the Gospel by what we should call "half-time work" as a tentmaker, is possible in the West and deserves, one might even say demands, revival. But India has a totally different tradition in these matters, and what would be a mistake in the West may well turn out to be an inspiration for India.

Renouncing money for himself, the Sadhu strongly condemns all, especially ministers of

religion, who receive money for doing work, and do not do it heart and soul. "We ought to do God's work with the love which His children ought to have towards Him. Let us do it, not because, like hirelings, we feel we are going to be paid for our work, but, in the spirit of love, because it is our Father's work. And yet how many servants of God do their work perfunctorily, even though they receive salaries! Others there are who simply continue to receive their salary without doing any work. Their end is destruction.

"There was a governor in Nepal. He sent three men to work in his garden. One was to receive eight annas; another twelve annas; but the third, being a slave, was to receive nothing. The governor hid himself at a distance and watched their work. The man who was to receive eight annas laid himself down under a tree and slept without doing anything. The man whose wages were twelve annas worked hard. The slave was doing his work with all his heart as if it were his own work. In the evening the master sent for the servants and began paying them. The servant who was to have received eight annas came. 'You were lazy and slept under a tree,' said the master to him. 'So on that same tree I shall hang you.' And he hanged him on that same tree. The second man approached with fear. The master was pleased with him, and

besides the twelve annas appointed gave him a present. Then came the slave. 'What are your wages?' asked the master. 'Thou art the lord who hast purchased me,' said the slave. 'I am bound to serve thee all my life. Thou art my father. What thou givest me for food and clothing is ample for me.' 'Because you wrought not for wages, but for the love you bore me,' answered the master, delighted at his faithfulness, 'hereafter you shall be my son. All my possessions shall become yours.' Not having any children of his own, he adopted the slave as his son. When the man who was to be hung saw this he was moved with deep sorrow, saying to himself, 'Alas! If I had worked like him, I might also have had the same good fortune.' We also are sent to work in God's vineyard. To receive salary is not wrong; but to be idle though we receive a salary, or not to do God's work on the ground that we shall do it only when we receive a certain salary, is wrong. If, like that slave, we work in a spirit of love, feeling it is our Father's work, we shall surely become heirs of his heavenly Kingdom."

Marriage

One evening, when walking back from a meeting, he was asked: "Sadhuji, will you ever get married?"

"I am already married," said the Sadhu.

"What! already married?"

"Yes, I am already married to Christ."

"A friend once asked me why I did not marry," he said another time. "I get greater happiness from the friendship of my Lord." He seems also to have a fear, grounded on St. Paul's words, that if he married he might seek too much to please his wife, and would not devote his whole energy to God.

But while he himself does not think of marriage, he does not advise others to remain unmarried. A married clergyman, who was deeply moved by his addresses, enquired of him anxiously how he, being a married man, could serve the Lord as effectively as the unmarried Sadhu; the Sadhu assured him that even as a married man he could be a faithful minister of God. The question of a head for a Kristikul—a proposed institution for training young men to be Christian Sadhus—came up for discussion once. He thought it was not necessary for that man to be celibate. "Was not a married man at the head of a Gurukul for several years?" [1]

He has none of the ascetic's disposition to despise or avoid women. He emphasises the

[1] *Gurukul* is the name given to a school—there are now, we believe, three such—in which prospective *Gurus*, *i.e.* teachers, are educated by the Arya Samaj.

love that women showed to Christ on earth, and how they used to tend Him; and he suggests that they appreciated the Master more than men did, because having a greater capacity for love than men, they had really more in common with Him.[1] The Sadhu himself moves among women with unembarrassed ease; and he has women friends with whom he keeps in close touch through correspondence. Of his dead mother he always speaks in terms of the deepest love and reverence, and perhaps it is when he sits among women, chatting informally, that the depths of tenderness and affection in his nature become most apparent.

A Hindu sannyasi may not even speak to a woman; a sadhu, less strict, sometimes will. And in Hindu sacred books quite often—as indeed not infrequently in the writings of Christian Fathers—woman is a thing of evil, a temptation and a snare, to avoid which is in itself a virtue. Here conspicuously has Sundar succeeded in Christianising the Sadhu ideal. But it is just here also—where in certain ages the Christian Church of the West has partly failed—that the sadhu ideal, if it be interpreted by men less deeply imbued than Sundar with Christ's own views of women and of marriage, might easily retard the healthy development of the Indian Church.

[1] Cf. A. Zahir, *Soul-Stirring Addresses*, p. 45.

The Christian Sadhu and the Future

The consequences for India of this pioneer attempt to Christianise the sadhu ideal no man can foretell. Already four hundred young men have come to Sundar Singh, passionate to follow his example. Many of them he thought might be influenced by the emotion of the moment and would not have strength to persevere in so hard a life. Better not to attempt it than to begin and lay it down. He has told them to watch and pray; to make sure of, and then to follow the path, whatever it be, to which they are bidden by the Divine call. He has been asked to become the Head of a School to train men for the sadhu life. He declines. Buildings and organisations smack too much of the West. If he does anything of the sort he will do it in the Indian way. Religious orders and institutions rarely keep their first spirit after the founder's death. The Indian Guru takes five or six pupils to be with him and to share his life. That, thinks the Sadhu, is the better way—or at least the only way he would care to try.

Suppose, then, that all over India there should arise Christian sadhus. In a country so open to the appeal of religion the effect might be stupendous. . . .

But there would be some dangers.

St. Francis could acknowledge, and acknowledged joyfully, the authority of Pope and Church, in discipline and in theology. At the opposite pole of Western Christianity the Quaker mystic is subject, at least in conduct, to a very real discipline administered by the brotherhood. And experience suggests that for the individual himself, however much inspired, it may not be spiritually harmful to have to stop and think, perhaps even for a time to submit to some restraint of speech and action, at the instance of the leaders of his Church—provided always such restriction is not too unintelligent and too rigid, and that he is prepared, after due hesitation, to speak or act and take the consequences.

But a sadhu acknowledges no such authority. His one standard in thought or in practice is the inner light. In the West, especially in Anglo-Saxon countries, most men are up to a point, even though they do not recognise the fact, individualist in religion. But let any one make a Gospel of his private views and he is at once regarded as a crank. A shrewd, though kindly, public tolerates its cranks, it may even be a little proud of them ; but, before it accepts any man as prophet, he must have approved himself by lapse of time and by a variety of unwritten subtle tests, which few can pass who are not really prophets. But what may happen in a country

where any one—given that he has a mystic or ascetic turn of mind, which in India are fairly common—may don a sadhu's robe, and with it at least something of a sadhu's prestige?

In the first and second centuries A.D. the wandering "prophet," whether mystic, preacher, theosophist or ascetic, proved to be a useful ferment, a valuable stimulus to experiment and thought, but also a source of danger and distraction to the Church. Any one who has studied the intellectual, religious and social background of the Early Church as recovered by recent research, and then visits India, wakes up to find that, so far as the religious situation is concerned, the centuries have vanished and he is again—with differences, of course, history never quite repeats itself—in the Graeco-Roman Empire of the second century.[1] Many of the problems which perplexed the Early Church are likely to recur in India in only slightly different form. But with the experience of twenty centuries, the spread of education, the advance of science, and—where the value of visions or fancied revelations is the question—the advent of Psychology to light their path, the Church authorities of the present day should be able to

[1] This experience occurred to myself in 1913, and, a little later, quite independently, to my friend, Mr. T. R. Glover, of Cambridge. See his book, *The Jesus of History*, ch. ix.—B. H. S.

solve them—always more easily, sometimes perhaps more wisely.

Among the Christian sadhus of the future there may arise Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, but also, it may be, Anarchists, Antinomians, Heresiarchs. Some may be inclined in the one direction or the other by the attitude which Church authorities adopt towards them individually. Truth and right are one, error and unright are manifold, and where there is sympathy and a wise liberty—or better, where a liberty going beyond what most would consider wise is allowed—errors and extravagances tend to cancel one another.

A survey of the history of religion reveals the rule that progress has resulted wherever there has been successful co-operation between the men who are organisers of corporate worship and teachers of the achievement of the past in doctrine and in ethics, and the men who have the new vision, who embody the freedom of the Spirit—whether these two types be called priest and prophet, scribe and apocalyptist, theologian and mystic, or minister and free-lance. But where such co-operation has broken down, the result has always been stagnation, disaster and decline.

But another problem more specifically Indian may arise. A Hindu sadhu, it has been already said, is credited with magic powers. Sundar is

alert to discourage that belief. Will every Christian sadhu in the future be so careful? More than that, there is the Indian doctrine, "Worship your Guru as God." Hindu philosophy teaches that man is identical with the great Spirit, and the Sannyasi who by "concentration" and asceticism realises this can say, "I am God," and as such receives worship—not other than the worship which is offered to a Hindu divinity. Sundar disclaims the salutation *Swami* (Lord). In a land where philosophy, tradition and popular acclamation conspire to offer such a bait to human vanity, will all withstand?

Probably some will succumb. But surely the majority will not. The Sannyasi ideal is not easy of attainment; and to have done so much as that and then to be able to say, with St. Paul, "I count not myself to have apprehended," is a far more difficult thing. Yet Sundar Singh has shown that it is an achievement by no means impossible to the Indian temperament when inspired by the Spirit of Christ.

It is the genius of Christianity not to crush out natural aptitudes, whether in nations or in men, but to inspire each to higher achievement along the line of his own individual gifts. The sadhu ideal is associated with much that is greatest in Indian religion, both in the realm of speculative thought and in that of practical devotion—witness

the names of Sankara, Ramanuja, or the Buddha himself. The Christian sadhu movement has for India the immense promise that it is truly Indian. As interpreted by Sundar Singh, it is no less truly Christian.

There may be, there will be, times of danger and of conflict. But dangers foreseen and fairly faced can be overcome; if the true Spirit of Christ and the spirit of prayer be there, they will be overcome. If the regular ministers of the Church of India display always the gift of sympathy and "discerning of spirits" shown by Bishop Lefroy in his dealings with Sundar Singh; if Sundar Singh proves to be the first of a line of sadhus with even a half-measure of his humility and devotion, and his insight into the mind of Christ—it will be well with India.

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